



“LOOKING FOR GOD”

– John 14:1-14

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John 14:1-14 *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and*

prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 "And where I go you know, and the way you know." 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. 7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 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. 11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. 12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

In the Huffington Post on February 23rd, 2011 a Rabbi by the name of Eric H. Yoffie wrote the following entitled **“The Frustrating, Difficult, Never-Ending Search for God.”** His article began *“For most of us, the hunt for God never stops. We deny God, curse God and demand proofs of God’s existence that we will never get. But the search continues, motivated by a sense — often just a hunch, or the slimmest instinct — that there is holiness in our world that only God’s presence can account for. We know that what we believe about God may be wrong, but we prefer the possibility of false belief to no belief at all.”* (Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, Huffington Post Blog 02/23/2011)

The truth is, we are all searching for God. Whether we admit it or not, we want to know the purpose of our life and what leads to true fulfillment. We all desire to love and be loved. We want to know if someone is ‘out there.’ If there is a ‘supreme power’ that is watching over us in some manner and if He at all cares what we are doing. Jeremiah 29:13 tells us that *“If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.”* (NLT) But what a quagmire the journey can be! So many paths...so many voices...so many opinions. It can be a messy trip, yet scripture speaks almost in reply telling us that *“...God is not the author of confusion but of peace...”* (1 Corinthians 14:33)

Built into our very DNA is the need to find God. The search has been the topic of numerous movies, books, and personal stories: many public and many many more quite private. There is just something that drives us to find our way home.

Wikipedia tells of the August 1923 story of Frank and Elizabeth Brazier, who, while on a family road trip in Indiana with their daughters Leona and Nova, lost their two-year-old Scotch Collie/English Shepherd mix dog Bobbie when he was attacked by three other dogs and ran away. After an exhaustive search the heartbroken Brazier family were unable to find Bobbie and continued their trip before returning home to Oregon, expecting to never see their dog again. But in February 1924, six months later, Bobbie returned to Silverton mangy, dirty, and scrawny, with his toenails worn down to nothing. He showed all the signs of having walked the entire distance, including swimming rivers and crossing the Continental Divide during the coldest part of winter. During his ordeal he crossed at least 2,551 miles of plains, desert, and mountains in the winter to return home, an average of approximately 14 miles per day. After his return to Silverton, he experienced a meteoric rise to fame. His story drew national attention and was featured in numerous newspapers, including a research biography of His travels and the people whose paths he crossed. 2, 551 miles to get home. And that was just a dog.

Many people will never admit it, but there is just simply a need to find our way home. Back to our Creator...back to where we began.

Despite the chapter break in our modern rendition, the reality is that what was being said here in this passage is coming immediately upon the heels of those ominous words spoken to Peter, words which could do nothing else but take any man's breath away. And yet Jesus wanted Peter to know that He wasn't throwing him under the bus. He wasn't washing His hands of Peter any more than He does with us when we fail Him, even when our actions rival Peter for such an epic picture of catastrophe!

*1Co 10:13 But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. **And God is faithful.** He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.*

Despite the historical "crash and burn" of Peter, Jesus went on herein to speak words of comfort to him and to all who were there. Jesus and all the boys had certainly shared plenty of trials and persecution up to this point in the ministry of the kingdom, but none would compare to what they would face in the coming days. It would no doubt seem that the world was falling apart around them and that all they had participated in building was unraveling.

But Jesus wasn't panicking. In fact He was painting quite another side of the story. He was saying that despite how things appeared, this was not in any way the end. But whether they could see it or understand it at that point, it was actually a path to victory. They didn't grasp what was happening at that moment, but they would in time. Jesus said, "*Let not your heart be troubled.*" I believe He is telling us the same thing today. "*You believe in God, believe in me.*" It never occurred to these boys...or to us in those moments of destiny, that God is right in front of us and that He already "found" us.

It's so easy to become fearful in times of uncertainty, to take our eyes off Jesus and focus instead upon the storm. It is in those times we find ourselves sinking beneath the waves. Much of our doubts stem from living for the moment, seeing only today, and forgetting that we're only here for a while and this world is not our home. Our Lord is preparing a place for us, a place and time where there will be "*no more tears and no more crying.*"

Re 21:4 "*He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever.*"

"*I will come again.*" Sometimes we really need to be reminded of that fact. And notice that His futuristic words do not focus upon some heavenly residence but rather upon the fact that we will be with Him. Can you wrap your mind around such an idea? That we will be living with Christ forever? That we will be home with Him? THAT is heaven!

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Few verses encompass so much in so few words. Few carry in them such an impact. If there were any questions or lingering ambiguity in the minds of the apostles or in the minds of mankind today, this should settle it all. Jesus was not claiming to be merely a good teacher, a prophet, or a guru, or to lead man to a better living on this earth. He isn't even saying that He **possesses** these things or **knows** their secrets, however true that might be. No, He says He literally **IS** these things! He is stating that He **is** the path to life, He **embodies** the whole of truth, and **encompasses** the magnitude of life. He is both the quality of life now, and possesses its eternity, and there was, and *is*, no other. When I have **Him** I have all these things. When I "seek first the kingdom of God" before all things, all the things that bring us joy and peace will be "added unto our lives."

While mankind continues on its quiet and oft agonizing quest to find God, we must note that Christianity can never be lumped together with the other innumerable paths to seek our Creator. For there are factual aspects of Christianity that separate it from all the others. Jesus you see, *stands alone*. According to Him, there are not many ways to God. All paths do not lead to God despite the hyper-ecumenical stance that is so often taken today. There is but one, and His name is Jesus. The world seeks enlightenment through religion, yet Jesus says that eternal life is not found in a religion at all. It will never be found in a creed or set of rules. Life is found **in** Christ, not via his teaching or his creed. Many of us will

spend a lifetime coming to that reality! Thus without Him firmly on the throne of our lives, we will never know such a life or eternity. Jesus did not come to merely *show us* the way, He came to *be* the way. The answer isn't to learn a creed and follow the rules, it comes through possessing Christ. Dwelling with Him! He came not to teach us, He came to get us and bring us home. All we are required to do is follow Him home.

Many churches, a lot of them with full houses today, are preaching the "Christian way." Sadly, few of them are preaching Jesus *as the door*. Few of them are holding the line on the throne of Christ that He is to be Lord of our lives, not just Savior from the guilt of sin. He is the *way* to heaven, the *truth* in a world of lies, and the *life* we all seek in the depth of our souls.

One of the greatest criticisms ever leveled at Christianity is that it is too narrow. But there exists no other scriptural or historical understanding unless we, *as many are trying to do*, re-invent faith in God as a broad way, encompassing faiths of all persuasions.

Mt 7:13 *"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose the easy way."*

While the world is looking for God, we fail to grasp the necessity of a "mediator." We need to stop and grasp the truth that God is so far beyond us as humans that unless someone steps in to bridge the gap in a very real and significant manner, we *cannot* approach Him. Moses had a taste of that reality up on the mount that day. What language would we speak and how will we as mere men understand truths and concepts such as creation and destruction on a cosmic level that both occur with merely a word?

In all of the stories around the world...all of the religions, all of the "gods" and all of the searching, there is only one where the Creator came looking for us. And if you think Bobby the Wonder Dog traveled a long way, God literally "became one of us" to find us and bring us home.

Philip had walked, laughed, cried, ate, conversed, and traveled miles with Jesus. He no doubt held Jesus in very high esteem but still he didn't fully "get it." Like many who have followed Christ, he didn't understand. He didn't see the whole picture. He wanted to have God present Himself at the front door. But such cannot happen, for the distance between us is simply too great. Desperate situations called for desperate actions. Knowing the impossibility, God came looking for us in the body of one of us.

Many will claim even today that Jesus never claimed to be God. But here He states for all to hear, *"If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."* How many of us are still looking for the answers today because we are failing to see that in Jesus we have God right in front of us? We reject His handiwork and refuse the living proof of His deity that is evidenced in all of us who have been rescued.

So many seek a different path, even within the realm of Christianity. They want to tweak it here and adjust it there to make the whole issue a little more palatable to themselves and their friends. They want heaven, but they don't really want to share it with the Jesus of the Bible. Oh, they will never say so so bluntly! They just can't see God in the path Jesus presents! The one of dying to self, allowing Him sovereign control of our living, the one of humility, simplicity, obedience, and holiness. No, we want God, we just don't want Jesus.

Philip asks, "Show us the Father." All the while He was right there in front of them all. *"Philip was not satisfied with what he saw in Jesus, nor with what He had received in Jesus. Walking by faith was not enough. Philip wanted to see some astounding and spectacular Person who appeared in dazzling form."* (Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible)

How many of us are still looking for God today, but on our own terms we seek a flashy God who delivers the earthly stuff, the pleasures of this world, the ease of life, *and* eternal life? This draws us to churches that present a slick performance, a professional delivery, and 'pop' sermonette. Yet the message Jesus is giving is still the same. Humility. Servitude. Love of others over ourselves. Holiness, sanctification, dedication.

What should we be looking for? If it seems so overwhelming, even unbelievable to you today, just stop and look around you. Look at what Christ has done in the lives of those who truly call Him their own. *Look upon His work. Look at the incredible creation around us. The human body, the harmony of the natural world, human reproduction, the science of creation screams of a creator.* He who has been so found sees the proof of Christ everywhere he looks. Every moment of life is a manifest of His reality. There is peace. But for those who seek another God today, there continues to be confusion, unrest, and the constant seeking for satisfaction. James 3:16 tells us where there is self-seeking, there is confusion.

Jesus is letting us know today that there is no other way, no other path, no other redeemer, *no other God* than the One we find here. We cannot reinvent Him. We can polish Him up to make Him palatable to a world that wants all this world has *and* eternal life. This is our **way**, our **truth**, and our **life**. There is no other but Him.

How do we know for sure that we have found Him and He has found us? First, He says that those who believe in Him will *do the works that He does*. That's a critical fact to make note of because it certainly changes our modern vernacular use of the term "believing in Jesus."

Let's also make note of what our text does *not* say: It does not say we will **talk** like Jesus or **think** like Jesus or even **love** like Jesus, even though these things may be more or less true. We often want to present these things as the criteria, the proof of our standing in Christ. The text says quite simply and frankly that we will **do the same works that Jesus did**. I wonder how many of us say we believe in Jesus; but fail to do those works?

The Word of God therefore often disputes our claim. It does not say 'can do,' it says 'will do.' The Bible has many such passages for which we can look into the mirror to see who and what we really are, but frankly, most of us will avoid doing that at all cost. Jesus goes on to say that these works we *will* do will be even greater than His own. Can you fathom that? How can this be? For He was God in flesh!

Well certainly many of us have had more *time* than He had on this earth, so, more time to do those works. Today we also have the ability to minister, serve and bless on a global level, while the extent of Jesus' earthly ministry was confined to a narrow Middle East spectrum. Also, we are 'post crucifixion,' thus we have the chance to lead someone to salvation rebirth which is greater than feeding 5000, healing a blind man, or even bringing someone back from the dead as He did with Lazarus. Salvation feeds our hunger, gives us real sight, and brings us back from the dead.

Jesus states in our text that if we ask anything in His name, He will do it. Many will try to dispute this verse, saying they have many times asked for something in the name of Christ and did not receive it. But the words of Christ do not mean that we are to somehow use the name of Christ like a mantra or magic incantation. To pray for something "*in the name of Christ*" is to pray in harmony with His character, personality, and plan. If we are seeking for our own glory, our own advancement, or our own material pursuits, we cannot expect affirmative action in such. Those things are about *us*, not about the glory of the Father. The kind of prayer we are to seek and that will get answered are ones in unity with Jesus, His essence and His Father centeredness. We cannot pray for something contrary to His nature and expect to receive it, no matter what the 'name it and claim it' boys will tell you.

Does this mean God will never please us on an earthly level, or give us something we don't need or deserve? Definitely not. The Bible says God loves to give gifts to His children, but it also says He knows all our needs and wants before we even ask (Luke 11:13, Matt 6:32). The truth is, we don't really know what is right for us. That's why we need a Savior, a Redeemer, and Lord.

"And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." (1Co 8:2)

In order to ask in Christ's name, we have to live in close fellowship with Him. Otherwise we would not be able to know His heart and will concerning us. The closer we are to Him, the more our desires will be the same as His. 1Jn 5:14 "*And we can be confident that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will.*" All of this will only be realized by the child of God who has found God. Or rather has been found by Him. Oh, It will be good to be home...