

Sunday 010724

NFIHBC SP

John 14:1-14

Title: Surviving & Thriving: Love, Hope and the

Father

**Good morning & Welcome Happy New Year.**

Today's passage is John 14:1-14. If you need a bible raise hand.

While you're getting to the passage...

**Pastor announcement:** If you are wondering what Thom & Sue did on their first week of sabbatical, someone saw them out and recently sent us this video.

**Pray:** (Long Pause – Israel - Children..)

(Opening question): What do you do when you suddenly find yourself feeling vulnerable, powerless, hopeless, and uncertain of how to move forward? PAUSE You may ask anxious questions like: What am I going to do? How am I going to survive? Will I be Ok?

Today we are going to begin looking at how Jesus equips his disciples for this very thing in preparation for his departure. We will see that in Chapters 13 -17 Jesus prepares his disciples to not only survive, but to thrive and to share with others what they have learned about Christian living.

We know from **John 20:31** that John's *purpose* in writing the Book of John is: **READ** "*These things are written that...*" And it seems that everything in the book that is written and the literary design of the book is in support of that purpose.

Now the timeline for where we are in our passage today; Jesus and the disciples are in Jerusalem – the upper room the night before Jesus dies. John's narrative gives us a beautiful window into the intimate conversation Jesus has with his disciples preparing them for his departure just hours before he is arrested. In Ch 13 several important events happened in the upper room: Jesus demonstrated his love for them by washing their feet, Jesus tells them that one of them will betray him, they share the Passover meal which in other gospels includes the cup of the covenant, and then... Jesus drops the *devastating news on the disciples that he was leaving them, and that departure was very soon.*

**John 13:31-33 READ.**

What do you do when you suddenly find yourself feeling vulnerable, powerless, hopeless and uncertain of how to move forward?

In the next 7 or so weeks of our study thru the end of John 17 we'll see that Jesus

teaches the disciples, including John the author, a plan that is the gospel and results in Jesus disciples having and feeling love, hope, joy, peace, valued, purpose, empowered and oneness. And that plan is for you and I as well.

Now to understand our passage for today we need to back up a few verses in Ch 13, **John 13:34-35. READ.**

What does Jesus command them to do? *“Love each other”*. And what is interesting is that Jesus states this *immediately after* telling them he is *leaving*, ...which tells us two things. One that they *will continue on* as Jesus’ disciples, after He – the Master – is no longer physically present.

And **second**, that the first part of the plan for the disciples surviving and thriving in his absence is: *“love each another, just as I have loved you”*. This isn’t love like friendly love, this is “sacrificial love – lay down your life for others love, love that costs you something”. To love sacrificially will cost you resources like time and energy, and certainly challenge your pride and entitlements. This is the love that we receive from God that heals us, and fills us, and is poured out from us on others. This love is a radical love, beautiful and shocking in selflessness and why it doesn’t make sense in a secular world where the self is god. And that is why this type of love between God’s children is the primary sign to the world that we are Jesus’ disciples. **PAUSE** Do you look like this love?

That love is what we are commanded, by Jesus, to give to each other – and that gift of sacrificial love to each other is the first part of the plan of Jesus equipping his disciples to survive and thrive in his absence.

Yes, you and I sacrificially loving each other is part of the solution for each other thriving till Jesus physically comes back, till we are with him in glorified bodies. **PAUSE** But that is only one part. **“Love each another” (SLIDE)**, is the *first* part, that’s the base, love is the base of the plan.

The *second part* his plan for the disciples is to give them “hope” based on his promises of an eternal relationship with Him. **John 14:1-3 READ**

In verse one we see Jesus say to the disciples *“don’t let your heart be troubled”*, and then in the Greek Jesus repeats the exact same phrase again in **vs 27. READ** John the author has employed a Greek rhetoric literary device called “bracketing” or “inclusio” which involves placing similar or the same phrases and words at the beginning and end of a section to create a “bracketing effect”. This serves to emphasize and keep unified the material within the brackets. So we know then that within these 27 verses Jesus is dealing with their *“troubled hearts”*.

So what was Jesus seeing in them that prompted him to say this? Perhaps he saw it on

their faces and body posture? And of course because he is Jesus he knew their thoughts! And if we look for clues to this answer within the “brackets” we see in **v18** Jesus tells the disciples, **READ** “*No I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you*”. “Abandoned as orphans”. Some scholars believe that statement to be an idiom for: “powerless, unprotected, unprovided for, with no legal rights.” Those are powerful feelings for orphans, and Jesus recognizes those feelings in the disciples *after* he tells them he was leaving them. PAUSE.

What do you do when you suddenly find yourself feeling vulnerable, powerless and uncertain of how to move forward?

Let’s look closer at how Jesus responds to that.

First he says to “*Love each other*” – that’s the base., then He says “*Don’t let your heart be troubled*”. This is a curious statement by Jesus and an interesting choice of words – especially the word “*troubled*”.

Dan Wallace’s NET bible translates the Greek verb as “greatly distressed” and his footnote says “extreme emotional distress”.

We have already seen this word “troubled” pertaining to people used in John’s gospel three times previously – and in all cases it was used to describe... Jesus.

**John 11:33**... “*and he was deeply troubled*”. (context – Jesus at Lazarus tomb)

**John 12:27** “*...now my soul is deeply troubled.*” (Jesus just told Philip & Andrew he would enter his glory via the pathway of death)

**John 13:21** “*...now Jesus was deeply troubled.*” (Jesus at the last supper reveals that one of the 12 will betray him anticipating the beginning of the torture that he knows this betrayal brings).

Jesus was “*deeply troubled*” 3x – “greatly distressed”. This was Jesus’ human reaction in response to very hard situations.

It’s the same word that was used to describe the disciples in **(Mark 6:50)** when they are in the boat, rowing against the waves, and then they see Jesus and think he’s a ghost. They were “greatly distressed”.

So if Jesus was himself “troubled”- “greatly distressed” three times, what is he saying here to the disciples? He is certainly *not condemning* them for being “greatly distressed”, otherwise it would be a hypocritical “do as I say not as I do situation”. Again, distress is a natural reaction as we saw this clearly in the humanity of Jesus three times. Rather, what Jesus directs them to do *in their great distress* is to *choose to trust him*. He says “*Don’t let*” – which implies choice. *Choose* to not let their hearts be troubled so their distress doesn’t define them and drive them to unhealthy choices.

Does choosing to trust Jesus always reduce distress immediately? No, but it will help keep us from the temptation of bad coping options, doing something stupid. And in *choosing to trust* you will be blessed, grow, and bring glory to the Father.

Is that what Jesus did in *his* distress? Yes! Jesus modeled this choosing to *trust* the Father while in distress in **John 12:27 READ**

By his own admission we know that Jesus could have taken an “easy out”, “exit stage left”, but rather Jesus *chose to trust* the Father and submit to His plan, and in doing so, Jesus brought glory to His Father’s name. What’s the message? When “troubled ..choose to trust!”

Back in **14:1** we see Jesus then further defend his trustworthiness as the same as trusting the Father, when he says “**Trust in God, trust also in me**”. This was in Jesus indicating his deity, he was God, and as God – the I AM – he is very trustworthy. The trust that they had for the father, could also be given to Jesus. And now he can he can speak truth to them to give them *hope* ... that they know they can trust in.

But what hope can Jesus give the disciples distraught over Jesus leaving them? What hope can he give them about their relationship in the future?

When my son told Sheri and I that he and his wife were going to move to her family homestead in SE Ohio – it hurt, they were “leaving”. But in that hurt – the pain of separation – you know what that feels like, In that hurt we were comforted by “hope” that we could periodically visit each other and *be with them – together*. Hope.

In **verse 2** Jesus gives the distressed disciples an “image of the future” of what their relationship with Jesus will be, to give them *hope*, two images as a matter of fact.

This is important. If you ever have been told by a loved one that they are leaving or going away, questions naturally pop up: How long will you be away? Meaning when will we be together again? Where are you going? When are you leaving?

So Jesus anticipates these questions and thus tells them in (**v2 & 3**). “*There is more than enough room in my father’s house*, and that he was “*going to prepare a place for them, and will come for them*”. Jesus words here are two images that will be good news for these 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish listeners troubled hearts – even if they didn’t understand it in the moment.

Jesus uses the phrase, “*There is more than enough room “In my Father’s house*”. The only other time Jesus uses the phrase “*my Father’s house*” in the gospel of John is in reference to the temple in (**John 2:16**) when Jesus clears the temple and says “*stop turning my Father’s house into a market place.*” Thus the use “*my Father’s house*” here in Ch14 is the same meaning, the temple.

But could Jesus be referencing Herod's temple, or was he communicating something else? The temple replaced the tabernacle, so let's start there. The original purpose of the tabernacle -that became the temple - was so God could " *dwell among his people*". **Ex 25:8 NKJV**. In the tabernacle, with sin atoned for by the blood of an approved sacrifice, Holy God could dwell in the tabernacle among his people, in the center of the massive Israelite camp. Thus the tabernacle, that became the temple, was the "dwelling place of God among the people he loved". Emphasis on "God and man dwelling together based on the blood".

What Jesus is inferring here by the phrase "*in my Father's house*" in John 14:2 was the place that man could "dwell with God" among his people. And this future image of the disciples "*dwelling together*" with Jesus is what Jesus was giving the disciples and what the disciples needed to hear.

In that light, think about the meaning of the words "*in my Father's house*" from the perspective of Jesus just telling the disciples he was leaving. Jesus was telling the distraught disciples, including John, that in the future because of sin paid for by the blood of the lamb - himself - they would "dwell together" – BE TOGETHER. He was giving them hope, *hope that they would be together again*, based on Jesus sacrificing himself the next day - Jesus was giving them *relational hope* for them to hold on to thru the hardship of Christian life in a dark world. *Hope!*

Then Jesus makes this message of "relational hope" even *more* clear using another image. He says to the disciples "*I'm going to prepare a place for you*". This phrase is imagery of a betrothed Jewish man, who already shared the cup of the covenant with his bride, leaving his bride to go and prepare a room "*in his Father's house*". A room that is a bridal chamber, where he and his bride will initially live. When the bridal chamber is completed and deemed ready by the Father of the groom, then the Father sends the groom to go to the bride's house. The groom's arrival is announced to the bride with a shout, and then he escorts the waiting bride and the bridal party to *his Father's house*. This is the beginning of them being together for the rest of their days. In this groom's eyes, Jesus- we know from his words and his actions that this bride, his church, has infinite value, more than his own life itself. He cherishes and delights in her, and He simply longs to be with her, in her presence.

Now before we look at what Jesus says next line in v3. I want to address one misinterpretation of this passage related to some translations that use the word "mansions", as in "*in my Father's house are many mansions*". **(14:2b NKJV)**

This verse uses the term "**monai**", (**monai slide**) which most literally means "dwelling places." Translations such as the KJV have rendered this as "mansions." Many Christians hang onto "mansions" in a very literal way, imagining that Jesus is promising physical

mansions for all Christians in heaven. What Jesus is promising his bride is the *permanency of them dwelling together*, not a mansion. Could the place of dwelling together be amazing? Probably, he is creator after all, however everyone having an individual “mansion” is not the intended message. Dwelling with Jesus forever is the intended message. For more on that see the supplemental notes.

In the context of the betrothed groom speaking to his bride, the statement in **v3** then is the promise that a groom makes to his bride as he departs to prepare their dwelling place. And note, Jesus pledges this *to the disciples*. **READ**. This is such a beautiful promise from Jesus to his disciples, and from Jesus to you and I. This promise is a promise of hope. Hang on to this – this is Jesus *promise* that he is coming back for those that are his disciples – his bride. Together forever. Hope. PAUSE

As amazing as that all sounds, what Jesus offers the disciples actually gets better progressively.

Back in **verse 2** Jesus introduces the reality of the “Father” into the plan for the disciples. “Father” carries the imagery of “family”, of “home”, “of belonging”, and “not being alone because you have family”... And if you noticed, Jesus’ use of word “Father” only increases throughout Ch 14. (**slide “Father”**). That’s significant.

And this word “*Father*” answers the question the disciples have of “where are your going?”.

If you jump down to the end of **v12 (b)** Jesus says, “*I’m going to be with the Father*”.

So knowing that Jesus is *going to be with the Father*, then we can read the end of **v3** more clearly, “*...you will always be with me where I am*”. Where will he be? “*with the Father*”.

But the disciples in the past 2-3 years have not picked up on this truth yet – The truth that Jesus’ purpose on earth was to restore mankind’s relationship with the Father. In the narrative, the disciples are not just distressed, they are confused, and quite lost in the conversation - Anyone relate? So when Jesus says in (**v4**) “*and you know the way to where I am going*” Thomas about loses his mind. Jesus statement in v4 looks like a set up to me... slow pitch softball if you get the picture, and it works to show where Thomas head and heart are. Look at Thomas’ despairing emotional response in **v5 READ**.

Look, this is Thomas. Thomas is strong willed, has *big* emotions, and *big* reactions – its why we love him right?

And Jesus’ answer to Thomas in **v6** is crystal clear, and look how *exclusive* his statement is about himself. **READ**

Jesus statement about being “*the way*”, is “singular”. There is only one way to the Father. It is not the pathway of “good works”. It is not the pathway of becoming one with nature, it is not the pathway of chance like Islam, where Alah decides your fate. Jesus said there was only one way to the Father.. and he was it.

And he follows that up with “*I am the truth*”. And likewise this is singular. There is only one Truth and it centers on Jesus and his teachings. PAUSE And where this “*Jesus the way, and Jesus the truth*” leads is to “*the life*”. What is *the life*? It is the life that is possible because of the death and resurrection of Jesus that gives his disciples eternal *life*.

This “I AM” statement is the 6<sup>th</sup>/ of 7 “*I am statements*” we have seen in John so far. **(I AM slide)** Quick review- Jesus making “I AM” statements is Jesus publicly stating that he is YHWH, the LORD (all caps), the same that was revealed to Moses at the burning bush.. **(Ex 3:14)**

And In a relational context it means that he Jesus is YHWH and thus *equally trustworthy*. PAUSE

Then Jesus says, “*No one can come to the Father except thru me*”.

Let’s say you are like an Indiana Jones type – early 1900s history professor and explorer – adventure seeker, and are wanting to get to a hidden island that you know in your heart exists. You have spent all your resources, spent your whole life trying to get there, trying to find it and you haven’t. Then one day a person walks up to you and says “I heard you were looking for the island. I know where the island is, I’m the only one that can get you there. If you want to get there you have to *go thru me*”. He then tells you about the island, he describes what you thought the island was and then way, way more and he’s *soo* convincing. At this point you are even more convinced the island is real, and you say, “OK what’s the cost?” And he says, “It’s free”. “Free? I spent my whole life, and savings, and even government grants searching for this lost island, and you say its.. free?” The man “it’s free!” And you say, “What do I have to do?” The man “Trust me that I am the way to the island, that what I say about myself and the island is true, and I will take you to the Island. PAUSE Hearing that, what would you do?

Jesus said **(John 14:6)** “*No one can come to the Father except thru me*”. “Thru me” means he’s the only connection to God the Father, he’s the *only way*. To go “thru Jesus” means you bow to him in your head and heart as the Son of God, everything he said about himself is truth, and everything he says period is truth. PAUSE In context then, to have a “permanent eternal dwelling” with God the Father requires that you *go thru Jesus*.

Up to this point the disciples *thought* they knew who Jesus was... a great teacher, a miracle worker, a mighty prophet, fearless in confronting the corrupt religious leaders, a political Messiah that would usher in the next Millennial Kingdom where they would sit on thrones, but this... this is a whole new identity for them, a whole new purpose for the person they followed for the past three years as their master.

In one sentence Jesus reveals to the disciples the *incompleteness of their thinking about who He is and what his purpose is*. **READ v7.**

The understanding of the Father that Jesus wants the disciples to arrive at is what the Apostle Paul captures so beautifully in **Col 2:9 READ**. (*dwells*)

**That** verb “lives” is “dwells” - the same word that describes God “dwelling” in the tabernacle.

All of God the Father is in Jesus. All. Jesus breaks it down clearly for the disciples. He says if you *know me*, you know the Father, if you *see me*, you have seen the Father. In a way this is an invitation into a relationship with God the Father – How? Get to know Jesus! To know and see Jesus is to know and see the Father! Practically, then to know and see God the Father, only requires one to get to know Jesus – study him, observe his interactions, his responses, assume the posture of a disciple and sit at Jesus feet and listen to him teach. *Abide* with Jesus. That is to know the Father.

Well Philip in **v8** doesn't get it. **READ**

I don't think he's alone in not getting it – not in his days, and not in our days. This is tough...I don't claim to *understand* it, it doesn't make sense in my *human* thinking, so I can connect with Philip on his statement. I do tho accept Jesus' statement to be true based on **faith** in Jesus – Philip just isn't there yet – believing truth based on faith.

That's hard for all of us isn't it? Believing truth based on faith.

Yes Philip sees Jesus of Nazareth, the human, the rabbi, the miracle worker, and he hopes for Jesus the human Messiah, but he doesn't yet see and know God the Father in Jesus. PAUSE

Do you?

Now Jesus is a good teacher and wants to bring Philip to faith. To do so Jesus must challenge Philip's errant - limited thinking – so Jesus asks Philip questions. And Jesus is speaking not just to Philip but to every person who only sees Jesus the human, apart from God the Father. **READ 9 -10a**

Let me point out one of the things Jesus states in his 3<sup>rd</sup> question. “...*Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.* ” In that question lies a statement of *equality and oneness*. The Father is in Jesus, Jesus is in the Father.. equally and one at



the same time. Mind blowing – yes! But just wait for next week’s passage, the picture presented of the Godhead gets even better!

**This** “equality” is what Paul is referring to in **Philp 2:6**

So now listen and look carefully at Jesus’ next statement. To help those of us struggling to accept this, Jesus provides *evidence* of the Father *in him*. **10b READ**

Jesus cites his “*words and works*” as coming from the authority of God the Father living *in him*. Meaning, every “word” Jesus spoke, every “work” he did, was God the Father in him, thru Him.

In John’s gospel, the works are the seven miraculous signs Jesus gave us – these are evidence of the Father *in Jesus*. **(7 signs slide)**

And the “*words*” Jesus spoke as evidence of God the Father in him – there are so many, but just from John’s gospel, how about the seven “*I am statements?*” **(7 I am Slide)**

And those are just a *few* of his *words* that are evidence of the Father in him.

**This** brings clarity to **John 1:1 READ**. Jesus didn’t just speak the words of the Father in him, this helps explain *why* Jesus is “The Word”. PAUSE

Jesus next line (**v11**) brings Philip to a place of choice – and yes, *belief is a choice*. **READ**

And when one *does* choose to believe that Jesus is in the Father, and the Father is in Jesus, look at the amazing benefit of choosing to “believe”.

**v12-14 READ.** Now *context* is critical in understanding what is being said here. *Context informs* the interpretation. *In context* this is *not* an open ended promise about Jesus’ followers having unbridled power, and the ability to ask for anything, like a magic Genie that grants your wishes. Rather *in context* the “works” that Jesus did were the miraculous signs that indicated that Jesus *is the Son of God, the Messiah, and that he gives life*. Jesus’ works were all about loving the people of the world – bringing them salvation – deliverance from their sin thru his sacrifice that brings glory to the Father. So for Jesus to say that those who believe in him “*will do the same works and even greater*” and can “*ask for anything in my name and I will do it*” he must have *intended* for the disciples to carry on *his work to even greater measure*, meaning even more people coming to trust God the Father thru the disciple’s works. This was evident in Acts chapter 2 – when 3000 came in one day. Thus the works the disciples do and the asking in Jesus name have to be in line with what Jesus mission and purpose was. Be obedient to the will of the Father, provide salvation for the lost souls by providing a way to the Father, all which brings glory to the Father. That is what Jesus “works” accomplished.. and thus that is what Jesus empowers the disciples to do as well with

these statements.

But for the disciples listening to Jesus say **v12-14** “live”, these “greater works” that they would accomplish are *conditional on two clauses* in **v12** . The first conditional clause is they have to “believe in Jesus” – we covered that. The second conditional clause is “*because I am going to be with the Father*” . The “greater works” of the disciples won’t happen unless Jesus leaves the disciples and goes to the Father. If you want to know what that means...and why that is important to you as well, you’ll just have to come back next week. PAUSE

What do you do when you suddenly find yourself feeling vulnerable, powerless, hopeless and uncertain of how to move forward?

Today we looked at first three of the many gifts Jesus *gives to and equips his disciples with* in John 13 -17 so-they-can-survive and thrive, and they are all based on the gospel. These three are: Love, Hope and the Father.

1. The first is “love one another - sacrificial love”. Practically, how does that happen? Be in Christian community where you can be loved on, and eventually as you are being filled by God’s love, and growing and healing, then give love to others. Home groups, small groups, having close Christian friends, and serving on a team are some ways to create an opportunity for this key piece to happen.
2. Second is Hope: Where does your relational hope beyond the struggles of this life lie? Jesus offers the only absolute that we can anchor to.. “dwell with him forever”.
3. Third is the Father: Do you see and know the Father in Jesus?

Pray