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Series: The Gospel of John
Message: Show Us The Father

Transcribed Message
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John 14:7-11

There's a familiar saying, "like father, like son." And of course, that applies to daughters and mothers too, doesn't it? Like mothers, like daughters. And I often see in Bonnie characteristics of her mom, and I see in our daughter, Mary, characteristics of Bonnie. And then my three sons. People say that we look alike, we sound alike. I think probably when they say we look alike, they're thinking of our build and the fact that we spend so much time working out. But you know, that's true in the natural realm, isn't it? And we do see that in families. We see the striking resemblance sometimes just in looks, but in sound, in characteristics, in behavior. But it's also a spiritual truth. And it's a truth that you see reflected, for instance, when Paul writes to the Corinthians that he's their spiritual father. What does he say to them? You be like me; you imitate me. As I imitate Christ, you imitate me. Then we come to this remarkable statement on the part of the Lord Jesus this morning, in which he says that to know me is to know the Father, and to see me is to see the Father.

So, let's turn to John 14 again this morning. We look this morning at verses 7 through 11, and our big idea is very simple, very straightforward. The better we know Jesus, the better we will know the Father. This section in the Gospel of John is without question one of the most remarkable sections in all of the Bible, not only in the Gospel of John, but I think without argument in all of Scripture. We're invited into these chapters 13 through 17, the upper room discourse, the farewell discourse, in which Jesus just says some things that we just stop and pause and contemplate and think about and are in wonder and amazement of. So, let's do that again this morning.

The setting, I remind you, of just these three things to help us again be right back in context. This is the last night, remember? It's Thursday night. Jesus and the disciples are in the upper room. They are enjoying a meal together. Jesus has washed their feet. We have seen Judas leave and depart. There has been the sharing of the Passover,

and then Jesus transitions from the Passover, and he invests the Passover with new meaning that we call communion and the Lord's Supper. And so, all of this is happening. Jesus steps into these final words of encouragement, of discipleship, of really equipping these men as he is soon to depart.

And, of course, they're stunned in this whole experience. You couldn't hardly describe it as anything other than that. They're overwhelmed by Jesus's actions, and they're overwhelmed by his words. They have lived in this most recent experience as this week has unfolded with the sense of self-aggrandizement and self-importance. Their focus has been on themselves, right? And here Jesus steps in on this last night that he's with them, and he redirects their focus. And he's not spending time focusing on himself. He's spending time focusing on them and encouraging them and lifting them up. So, it's just this remarkable picture for us.

But in the midst of all of that, there is a lot of confusion too. They believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They believe that Jesus is the Messiah. They believe that he's the Anointed One. Jesus said in the 13th chapter, all of you are clean. He was speaking, I believe, of their standing before God in their understanding of who he is. That understanding, however, is incomplete. That understanding is insufficient. Jesus is about to die. He's about to experience this excruciating death. He's going to be leaving them. And these are troubling words. He's talked about it a lot. It just hasn't landed with the impact and force that it has on this last night.

And so, his words to them in the first verse of this chapter are, let not your heart be troubled. And it is still true today for those of us with troubled hearts at times to come back to this prescription, right? Come back to this remedy. And what is the remedy? What is the prescription that Jesus gives? I want to suggest to you that it is a further self-revelation of who God is and of the promises that God has given to them. It's a beautiful reminder to us to step into the Word, to see what it is that is God's plan, and then to look at who it is that has made those promises.

So, let's look this morning, getting to know God. And to say that this is a challenging section is going to be an understatement. We're going to have to have on our thinking caps as we move through this. We're going to start, however, with something that isn't new. This isn't new information. Look at verse 7 with me and we'll

begin there. If you had known me, Jesus said, if you had known me, you would have known my father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. This isn't new information. It isn't new information because this is something that they should have known. They should have known this.

When Jesus says, you have known this, it reminds us how we sometimes use the word "know" in different ways. It's kind of fluid, isn't it? The way we use the word "know". Sometimes we know the facts. Sometimes we say we know something and we kind of know it, but we don't really know it all that well or that complete. We talk about knowing each other. So, there's a relational sense.

But then there's sometimes that deep sense of yes, I know, I understand, I get it, I've grasped it. I realize the truth that is being spoken of here. John uses this word "know" six times as you look at verses 4 through 7. Six times he talks about something that they should know or would know or will know. So, I don't think Jesus is at this point questioning, again, their trust in him or their belief in him. After all, they have left everything to follow him. They've left everything behind. In some cases, they've left a business behind, right? They've left family behind. So, they're clearly dedicated to him and to who he is. That's not in question. They have been with him every day of their life now for these three-some years.

So, he's not questioning that, but there is a sense of mild rebuke in these words in light of what it is that they should have known, right? Let me just rehearse for you what it is that John has said. You can go back to John chapter 1 and verse 18. This is what John said. Remember this remarkable prologue that we keep saying we go back to and we go back to. Well, here it is again. Look at it in verse 18. No one has ever seen God, the only God who is at the Father's side. He has made him known. The Word has made him known. The Word that became flesh has made him known. Nobody has seen God, but now here he is. He's standing before you. That was the very first chapter.

Then you go over to the eighth chapter, and in verse 19, this is what we read over there. Verse 19: They said to him, therefore, where is your father? Jesus answered, you know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also. That's what he had said previous to this upper room, right? He had said these very same words.

Over in chapter 10 and verse 37, this is what Jesus says. If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father. So there he says it yet again, right?

Chapter 12 and verse 44, Jesus says this. He cries out and said, whoever believes in me, believes not in me, but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me, sees him who sent me. So, this is something that Jesus has repeatedly said, that John has repeatedly reminded us about. They should have known this.

Notice Jesus says in that statement, from now on you know him. He's pointing to what they would know. This is what they should have known, right? It's been said so many times. Now he points to them and he says, this is what you will know from now on. Now that's not a reference to that moment. It's not that something's going to happen that moment, that night, in that room. It's again, Jesus looking forward and ahead to the cross. It's Jesus reminding them, as he had previously said on many occasions, my hour has not yet come. Oh, but now it has come, and now it is here, and actually it's coming tonight. So, Jesus is speaking of his death, of his resurrection, of his ascension, and of the coming Holy Spirit. All of those things are going to be catalysts so that they will know. So that when you get to the 20th chapter in verse 28, and Thomas is looking at the risen Lord, and he says, my Lord and my God. He knew, didn't he? He knew. Jesus prophesied about that moment. He says, you should know, you will know, you will know when I have been crucified, raised, ascended, and the Holy Spirit has come. But these truths are not easily grasped. Again, we've said this repeatedly. We're looking at the full revelation of God's Word, aren't we? We step in from the beginning and the end, and we have the whole story. They're living it every day.

So, notice then, Jesus, I think this is the response he wants. It's almost like this is somewhat rhetorical, that Jesus is speaking this to them, and I think this is the response he wants. Because, again, just like we saw last time with Thomas, when he steps in and says, well, Lord, actually, we don't know where you're going. When Jesus says, you know where I'm going, and Thomas is brave enough, he's courageous enough to say, actually, Lord, we don't know where you're going. Well, here is Philip now. And Philip is doing the same thing that we appreciated Thomas for, right? He's asking a question that

we're all thinking of together. What Thomas said was helpful to answer the questions in the minds of all of the other guys. What Philip now asks is going to do the same thing.

And I would say to you, we've all thought this. We've all said this. What it is that Philip is asking and saying? Look at verse 8. When Philip says to him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us. And Jesus, as we've said so often, he welcomes these questions. He welcomes this interaction. He knows that the despair and the discouragement is coming, and so he welcomes this. And who among us hasn't wanted God to show up in some tangible, physical, experiential, sensory way at a critical point in our life? We're all just like Philip. We really don't know. We really don't understand what you're saying. We need more evidence. We need more proof. God, we want to see you. We want to be able to see who you are. We want a physical manifestation, right? We want an experience of some kind to remind us that you're here, and that you know what we're dealing with and what we're going through.

It's like the little child lying in bed at night in the dark room, and they cry out. And as a parent, you go in there, and you're trying to comfort them and help them, and at some point, you maybe say to them, well, God is right here with you. They don't want to know that God is right there with them. They want to know you're there with them, right? Or they want a God with a face that they can feel and touch, and that's kind of what Philip is saying here. We are prone, like the disciples, to walk by sight and not by faith.

So, here's Philip and the other ten, and they're about to be reminded of something amazing. Remember, John has given us seven I Am statements, and he's given us seven signs that Jesus is the Christ. You go back to the second chapter, and it was the water turned to wine, and then it was the lame man, and then it was the nobleman's son, right? And then we had the feeding of the five thousand, and we had Jesus walking on water. We had the blind man who is given sight, and we end up in the eleventh chapter, and we have a dead man in the tomb for four days that Jesus calls back to life. And so, they've seen all of this, and it's like Philip is saying, Lord, could we have just one more? Could we have one more? We've seen all these amazing things. We need one more. We need a big one. We need the biggest one of all. And what they really wanted, I think, at that point was a theophany. They wanted a theophany.

When we think about a theophany, it's a visual, tangible, temporary manifestation of God. These men are men of the Scriptures. They know the Old Testament Scriptures. Philip knew the history of theophany in the Old Testament. He knew that Moses had the experience of standing before a bush that was burning but not consumed. He knew that Moses heard the voice of God say, take your shoes off, your sandals off, you're standing on holy ground. He heard the voice of God. He saw a manifestation of the presence of God. He knows that at one point, Moses wanted more than that, and he wanted to see the face of God. And God said, Moses, no man can see my face and live, so why don't you go hide over here in the rock, and I'll walk by you, and you'll barely see me, right?

These men knew the history of Israel in the wilderness. They knew the experience on Mount Sinai with the thunder and the lightning and the voice of God. They knew the pillar and the fire in the wilderness. They knew that God had manifested Himself and made Himself known to His people. They knew the story of Elijah who wanted the same thing, only God wasn't in the wind, and He wasn't in the earthquake, and He wasn't in the fire. He was in the still, small voice. They know the experience of Isaiah when he sees this incredible vision of the glory of God in Isaiah 6, right? And he cries out, I'm a man of unclean lips. They know about Ezekiel and the living creatures. They know about Daniel and the Ancient of Days. They have all of this in their own mind as to how God has made Himself known and revealed Himself. And so here, all of that was a foreshadowing, and it climaxes here in the presence of God in Jesus.

That's why Matthew can say, Emmanuel, God is with us. And that's why John will say that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you might have life in His name. That's why the writer of Hebrews in the first chapter in verse 1 says that in the times past, God has spoken to us in different ways through the prophets, but He has in these last days spoken to us through His Son. And so here it is.

Jesus responds to Philip with a mix probably of sorrow, of compassion, and probably a little bit of sympathy for where they are. And then He makes this amazing claim in verses 9 through 11. Jesus said to him, have I been with you (that's a plural you), have I been with you guys so long and you, (that is now Philip, singular), you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How could 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. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Let's be honest, these verses are hard to understand. So, let's, before we jump into these verses, let's review our Trinitarian theology and see if we can make our head hurt a little bit this morning, all right? Remember, in the understanding of the Trinity, the word Trinity isn't in the Bible, it's just a word that has been used to describe and summarize what the Bible describes as the oneness and the diversity of the self-revealed God. So, we talk about the fact that we're Trinitarian.

There is only one God, right? There is only one God. We are monotheistic. The Lord our God is one. Deuteronomy chapter 6 and verse 4, right? So, we're not polytheistic. There aren't many gods. There's one God. We're monotheistic. We're not pantheistic. God isn't in everything. We're monotheistic. We're certainly not atheistic because we see the glory of God all around us every day. But within the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons. There's Father, there's Son, and Holy Spirit.

So, theologians sometimes put it this way, there is the what and the who. The what and the who. The what is the fact that there is one God. There is one God, one in substance, one in essence, one in being. There are three who's. There are three who's. There's Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So, a helpful visual is something like this. When you visualize what this looks like, God obviously is one. We're monotheistic. Within the substance and the essence of that one God, there are three persons. There's the Father, there's the Son, and there's Holy Spirit. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. The Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Son. The Spirit is not the Father, and the Father is not the Spirit.

And so, what we have is a mystery, right? The secret things belong to the Lord our God. The things revealed belong to us and to our children forever. And to the extent that we can grasp anything with regard to the Trinity, we understand the what is God, the who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It's incomprehensible to the finite mind. We're talking about the infinite God, but it is not contradictory. It's incomprehensible, but it's not a contradiction.

So, how has this been dealt with down through church history? Well, down through church history, it's been very easy to slip from Trinitarianism into false teaching, right? And so, Unitarianism, the Unitarian Church. The Unitarian Church believes that God is the Creator, God the Father. Jesus is a creature. He's not deity. He's not God. The Holy Spirit isn't God. So, they solved it and just said, there's one. He's the Father.

And then you have those that are a little bit farther, or a little bit closer to the truth, but still missing it, and they're called modalists. Modalists believe that God just expresses Himself in different ways. So, then the Old Testament, we have the Father God. We get to the New Testament, we have Jesus as the Son of God. We get to our present age, and we have the Holy Spirit as God. And that's a corruption of what Jesus is teaching here. It's a corruption of what the Bible teaches. The Bible doesn't teach modalism, that God just appears in different forms in different times. No, He has eternally always been Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And then, of course, we have those that are simply giving up and saying, we're tritheists. There are three gods. Well, Jesus says something different. Look again at verse 9, 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? Jesus is simply saying, open your eyes to the truth. This is a major revelation of the Christian faith. This is what makes the Christian faith distinctive. The doctrine of the Trinity is unique to Christianity. As complex and difficult and hard for us to understand as it is, it is not true of Judaism, it is not true of Islam, it is not true of any other world religion. This is true only of Christianity. It is the heart of what we believe, because we believe that Jesus came to reveal to us the Father God. He came to make known God's reaching out to us and the pathway back to God Himself.

Here's how one commentator put it. Jesus is the revelation of God, and that revelation leaves the mind of man staggered and amazed into wonder, love, and praise. Right? That's what it does. They really do know the Father. They just haven't fully comprehended it yet. They just haven't grasped what it is that they know. They don't know fully what they know, right? Everything that they have seen in Jesus has been a revelation to them of the Father.

So, if you want to know what does the Father think and feel about death, you stand with Jesus in John 11 outside of the tomb of Lazarus, don't you? And He's indignant at what sin has done to the human race. He's weeping. That's the heart of the Father seen in Jesus. If you want to know what the heart of the Father is towards the confused woman in John 4 at the well, who's got all of these different belief systems coming at her and she can't figure it out, it's the heart of the Father to send His Son Jesus to reveal that He is the one, right? He is the Messiah. She's standing there and talking to Him. If you want to know the heart of the Father towards a woman who is cast out and caught in sin, it's the woman that is brought to Jesus in John 8, right? And the woman caught in adultery. And it's the heart of the Father that Jesus would move towards this woman with open arms offering her forgiveness and a path into a relationship with Him. If you want to know what the heart of the Father is towards those who experience or who live out hypocrisy, ensnared in legalism and want to capture everybody around them into a system that doesn't honor God in any way. There's no life-giving force to it. Then you look at Jesus and His interactions with the religious leaders. If you want to know what the heart of the Father is towards those who would exploit people for money and use religion to do it, go with Jesus into the temple and watch Him throw over the tables, right? That's what Jesus is saying in verse 9, open your eyes. You know more than you realize because Jesus has revealed to you every day of His life the heart of the Father and His love for them.

Then, just consider again what John said. We keep coming back to it over and over, but it's because it's the very purpose for which John wrote this gospel. These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life in His name. That's what John is doing here. That's the whole purpose. So, Jesus says, open your eyes and understand.

Then notice thirdly, believing is seeing. Again, verse 10, 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. This is inter-Trinitarian mystery, right? This is the unity and the harmony and the fellowship, specifically here between the Father and the Son. The Father is in me and I am in the

Father, this unity. There's no doubt that there's something of a tone of admonishment in these words, but I think there's also a sense of disappointment.

But look at the heart of Jesus. He steps into this scenario, and He shows us what discipleship looks like. He shows us what it means to be disciple-making, because notice what happens here. We're all disciples like those on the road to Emmaus. That's me, and that's you.

Well, what does that mean? It means we're slow of heart to learn at times. It means we don't always get what's coming at us. It means we need some help and encouragement. We miss more than we take in at times. That's the picture of these men in this upper room in this last night with the disciples, and it's reflective in those two walking on the road to Emmaus. But I just want to say to you, Jesus will not be discouraged. Jesus will not be discouraged. He will turn them to the Word. He will turn them to a further revelation of Himself. He will turn to them, and He will say to them, here is the divine authoritative Word, and oh, by the way, there is the coming Holy Spirit of God who will indwell you and enlighten you and further make these truths known.

And then verse 11 simply drives home the point. There's communion, and there's fellowship. Look at verse 11. Believe in Me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. It's almost like Jesus says, here's your choice. There are two things in front of you here. First of all, believe in My words. Believe in My words. That is, keep on believing. That's the tense here. Keep on believing. Believe and keep on believing, right? Verses 4 through 7, we've already said the word "know" is used in those verses six times. In verses 8 and 9, He talks about showing and seeing four times. And then in verses 10 and 11, He uses the word believe three times. So, it's all coming together.

Philip wants a sign. Philip wants a miracle. Jesus says, walk by faith. Pursue faith. It reminds me that we trust in the promises of God which are sure and certain. It takes me right to Peter's comment in 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 18. Remember, Peter saw one of the most remarkable things that anybody has ever seen. He saw on the Mount of Transfiguration a glimpse of the glory that would be the ascended Christ. He saw that.

Physically, he saw it. Personally, he saw it. And yet, he writes in 2 Peter, and he says, you know what? I'm paraphrasing. We can have all kinds of experiences, and we're kind of drawn to those experiences. But he said, we have a more certain and sure word of prophecy, which is simply to say, you can trust your experience if you want, but I'm going to trust in the written, revealed word of the living God. And that's what he offers to us.

Now, the other choice, of course, if that's not enough, then Jesus says, believe in my works, right? Or else believe on account of the works themselves. All of those things that they have seen Jesus do. He speaks words from the Father, and he does the works of the Father. You're right back again to these things have I written to you, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you might have life in his name. The better we know Jesus, the better we will know the Father.

So, what do we take away? The only way to know God, the only way to know God is to be a student of the Word. This is his revelation to us of himself, right? Get this. God has revealed everything you need to know about himself, and by the way, about yourself, and his Son, and how to live now and forever. Is that amazing? That in this book, this is the prescription, this is the remedy that God has given to us for every circumstance, for every situation in life. We need not despair, we need not be troubled, we need not be discouraged, because here is the divine prescription, a greater knowledge of who God is, of his Son, and of his will, and plan, and purpose for our life. He has literally given to us everything that we need to live life well, to live life in a way that honors him and pleases him.

And of course, to be able to do that, it all begins with the gospel, doesn't it? It all begins with the gospel. This loving Father who Jesus reveals has his arms wide open to every one of us. He welcomes us, he pursues us, he seeks after us. He wants to have a personal relationship with you, and that is possible, not on the basis of what we do, but on the basis of what Jesus has done. When he died on the cross, he took care of the sin problem once and for all, so that my sins could be forgiven, so that yours could be forgiven, that if we trust and believe that what he did is all that needed to be done, he forgives our sin and he gives us eternal life.

Let's pray. Gracious Father, we're thanking you again for the Lord Jesus Christ, thanking you for the revelation that he gives to us, Father, of your heart, of your desire to know us and to be in relationship with us. Thank you that you have given to us all that we need to live this life well, to live this life in a way that honors and pleases you. We pray that your Holy Spirit will encourage us in these words. We pray that your Holy Spirit will open hearts to believe and trust that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you give to us life that is everlasting. In Jesus' name, amen.