

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Ch. 14

It's Thursday night of Passion Week. Jesus Christ knows He'll die tomorrow on that old rugged cross. He convenes His disciples for their "Last Supper."

Childishly, the boys spar over which of them is "the greatest," just as He who truly *is* the greatest kneels and washes their feet. When He discloses that one of them will soon betray him, Judas, that one, disappears into the night to do his dirty deed. Jesus warns His pal Peter that this night even he will deny that he *knows* Jesus!

Repeatedly, Jesus says He must die. Samuel Johnson said, "When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully." **Let's read John ch. 14:1-31.**

Highway to Heaven

Half of the New Testament was written by Saul, a distinguished Jewish statesman who tortured and jailed the early Christians. After his famous "Damascus Road" conversion, he's now known as Paul, God's first envoy to Gentiles in the Mediterranean states.

He was whipped, stoned, shipwrecked, robbed, mobbed, faced death at sea, starved, froze, jailed and executed by Nero because he spoke for Christ. Having proven his 180 degree pivot to sacrifice to follow Jesus, he makes a strong appeal to believers in Greece. **Let's read it in Philippians 4:6-7.**

Paul's experience-based way to get stress relief is this: tell God what's eating you, thank Him for loving for you and including you in His eternal plans, then rest in His indescribable peace that will guard your heart and mind, our two most vulnerable organs.

DISCUSS:

The Big House

Jesus says, "Put your mind at ease, friends. I'm returning to my Father's house to get your room ready." Ray Stedman writes, "Consider the size of the Father's 'house,' i.e., the universe. ... It takes *eight minutes* for light to travel from the sun to the earth ... Our own sun is one of *100 billion suns* in our own Milky Way galaxy -- and our galaxy is so vast that it would take light *300,000 years* to travel from one side of the galaxy to the other. Our galaxy is *one of some 100 billion galaxies* in the known universe, and there

are millions of light-years of utter emptiness separating each of those billions of galaxies!”

Could God be “everywhere present” throughout the trackless expanse of space? Why not? He’s omnipresent, “everywhere at once.” That said, how could we question the Creator’s sanity in asserting, “I am *THE* Way, *THE* Truth, *THE* Life. Nobody comes to the Father except through Me.” “Such arrogance,” you huff.

Only Jesus lived a sinless life on earth. *Only* He died for our sins. He alone rose to life to share with us His victory over sin and death. The path to God is narrow, like stepping out of an airplane at 35,000 feet chuteless. DOWN is the “*only*” way you’ll go.

DISCUSS:

You Ain’t Seen Nuthin’ Yet

Jesus walked on water, made cripples walk, the blind see, calmed a storm by speaking to it, fed thousands out of one lad’s lunchbox, cast out demons, even raised the dead.

When He promised that His guys would outdo feats that He had done on earth, He referred to quantity, not quality, because after Jesus returned to heaven, Peter preached in Jerusalem, and 3,000 people gave their lives to Christ in one day! Billy Graham spoke to a million-plus gathered in a public square in Seoul. Jesus never had either of those happen! And He never traveled outside Palestine.

Jesus’ “Ask anything using my name, and I’ll do it” is one of the Bible’s most abused promises. If you could just slap His name on any wish, you’d have lightning in a bottle. “In my name” is like a power of attorney. My Mom was dying, in great pain and was refused medication. I marched to the nurses’ station, armed with a copy of her power of attorney and demanded, “Look, you’re not talkin’ to me; you’re talkin’ to Annie Jane Toles now, so read my lips: ‘Stop my pain!’” Jesus says, “Ask Me for anything that *I* would ask for, and you’ve got it! Pray like this, and the sky’s the limit.”

The Comforter: A Blanket Promise

Knowing His closest pals would be persecuted and martyred because they would speak out for Him, Jesus promised to send them, and all of us who follow Him, a “Comforter.”

The Greek is “paraclete” -- helper, advisor, one who strengthens,

encourages, acts as our Advocate. This is the Holy Spirit who’s a permanent resident in all who’ve entrusted God with their life. The God of the universe actually wants to hang out with you and me!

The only true and living God, who holds the destiny of the world, is irrelevant simply because we mortals can't *see* Him? Doesn't blowing Him off like take more faith than believing in Him?

DISCUSS:

A Different Brand of Peace

Jesus says once we receive Christ's love, we show it in our lives. We start wanting to live His way. He says His Holy Spirit will come along to *teach* His followers and *remind* them of all He'd told them.

In these intimate, 11th hour instructions to His posse, Jesus says the peace He'll give doesn't come from running from reality or toughing it out by being totally self-reliant. It'll be the ability to be calm, to be settled, thanks to a deep confidence in God.

“Let's Vamoose”

Jesus has just dumped a load of heavy truth on his mates who must be reeling, trying to make sense of it all. With the cross breathing down His neck, He has some options. He can say, “You guys hunker down here, and I'll go take my medicine.” Or “I'm gonna go down, if need be, in a hail of bullets, so you best clear out 'til this blows over. But like Todd Beamer, He beckons, “C'mon, *let's get goin'!*” Let's!

Either you trust Jesus or you do not. If you don't, is your foundation reliable enough to justify rejecting Jesus Christ and His gift of eternal life? Do you have a *reasonable* faith or just *opinions*?

Jesus said, “The one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.” (Luke 6:49)

Jesus invites His disciples to leave the upper room *with* Him. He wants to leave this room *with* you today. Earlier in John (5:24) Jesus told the Jewish leaders, “I say emphatically that anyone who listens to my message and believes in God who sent me has eternal life, and will never be damned for his sins, but has already passed out of death into life.”

If you didn't enter today with Jesus, you can leave with Him. Tell Him now, in your own words, “Lord, I'm ready to surrender my life and my will to You. Thanks for paying the outrageous price that your Father's justice demanded so that my sins could be forgiven. I

acknowledge my sins. I accept the free gift of forgiveness, certainly *not* based on anything I've done to earn it. Please show me now how to live Your way. Thank You, Jesus. Amen.”

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