



CHRIST
EVANGELICAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH (PCA)

Sermon Reflection Guide; John 14:18-24

1. In John 14 Jesus opens by saying, “Let not your hearts be troubled” and proceeds to make promises to his disciples. What is the promise that Jesus makes in verse 19? Why does Jesus use the word “orphans” and what does that tell us about the promise Jesus makes?
2. What difference does this kind of promise make in distressing and uncertain times such as our current situation? How is this a comfort to you right now to know Jesus will never abandon his followers?
3. Read verse, 20. When does Jesus say this promise will be fulfilled? Consider that these verses are bookended by promises about the coming of the Holy Spirit.
4. Jesus not only makes a great promise to us but also tells us exactly how followers of Christ are to grow in our understanding and love for Jesus. How does this happen according to Jesus in verse 21? What does Jesus mean when he uses the word “manifest”?
5. In verse 22 Judas (not the betrayer) asks Jesus why he is only going to show himself to the disciples and not the whole world. Jesus answers with verse 23. What reason does Jesus give for why he is going to do this? This promise is as big as the whole Bible and echoes from Leviticus, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Gospels, 2nd Corinthians, Revelation and many other places. In what ways is Jesus' reason for this promise a great comfort to us now?
6. Finally, in verse 24, Jesus gives us a check against self-deception. What is the test Jesus calls us to be giving to ourselves? Why should those of us who desire to know Christ more and grow in our obedience be greatly encouraged?

Sermon Summary

John chapter 14, where we find our text for this week begins with the greatly comforting and timely saying of Jesus, “Let not your hearts be troubled”. In John 14 the disciples had many reasons for their hearts to be troubled. In our current social moment, we too have many reasons for our hearts to be troubled, but it is in this moment that Jesus comes to us and says, “Let not your hearts be troubled.” As the rest of John 14 unfolds Jesus makes great promises to his disciples then and those who follow him today that bring comfort and peace to our troubled hearts.

In John 14:18-24, Jesus makes a comforting promise to his disciples and to us today. We want to first ask what is the promise that Jesus makes? In verse 18 Jesus says, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” Jesus’ word choice is very intentional, he says he will not leave you as “orphans”. He doesn’t say, I will not leave you all alone, or I will not leave you in need, but rather he tells us he will not leave us as orphans. Think about an orphan. An orphan is not merely a person who is all alone or in need. Specifically, an orphan is a person without a home and a family. Orphan’s are arguably the most destitute and venerable class of people in the world. And the promise that Jesus makes is that when he leaves the earth in bodily form, he will not leave his disciples destitute and vulnerable, without a family or a home. This promise is true to us right here and right now. Even with the situation with the virus, with our retirement accounts, with our jobs, with the stock market, Jesus has not left us. He has not abandoned us. He promises right here in John 14 that he will never do that. If you belong to God by faith in Christ alone then He is always with you by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. No matter what our situation or location there is no place we go or situation we find ourselves in where the follower of Christ can be abandoned by God.

We hear the promise from Jesus that he will never leave us but will come to us and so now we ask when? When does Jesus say he will come to us? In verse 19 Jesus says, “Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.” When is this “yet a little while” that Jesus is speaking of? This promise finds itself book ended by other promises from Jesus concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit. In light of this it makes the most contextual sense that Jesus is speaking of the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to indwell the hearts of believers. So, when will this promise for Jesus to never abandon and always be with his disciples happen, it happened on the day of Pentecost and is continuing to happen to this day for all those who by faith trust in Christ alone. The remarkable thing about Pentecost is the reality of our union with Christ which Jesus describes in verse 20, “In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.” It is through the outpouring and indwelling of the Holy Spirit that believers are united to Christ. On this amazing day in redemptive history believers for the first time were united to Christ and therefore we have fellowship with God the Father, by God the Son, through God the Holy Spirit.

We have the answer to what Jesus promises and when the promise will be fulfilled but we should also ask how? How, after Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, how will followers of Christ be able to grow in their knowledge and love for Jesus? Jesus tells us that one the results of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and united to Christ is that we will love Jesus and that our love will be shown by our obedience to all that Jesus commands. Jesus isn’t talking about a cold, Pharisaical obedience motivated by earning God’s love, no one can earn God’s love. Jesus is talking about obedience to Christ motivated by a great love for Christ. This teaches us two important principles. First, if at our root we have a love for Jesus then we will produce the fruit of obedience to Jesus. Second, it is through our love and obedience for Jesus that we

come to know Him more and grow in our love for him more. Jesus promises that for those who love and obey him that he will “manifest himself to them.” That word manifest it means to reveal more and deepen our understanding more. Jesus means that as we seek to obey him out of love we will grow spiritually in our knowledge and love for Jesus. Pastor and theologian James Montgomery Boice says, “Many Christians would be willing to do spectacular things if by that means they could come to know Christ better. But they are unwilling to do the commonplace things that are involved in simple obedience. Will you do them? If you will, you will most certainly grow in God’s grace. If you obey, Christ will increasingly unveil his heart to you.”

Finally, we ask why? Why does Jesus make this promise to his disciples then and to us today? In verse 23 Judas, not the betrayer but the son of James also known as Thaddeus asks, “Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” In his mind it would be better for Jesus to display and manifest himself to the whole world and not just the disciples and so he asks Jesus, why? Jesus answers this question in verse 23 with, “Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” Jesus says the reason he is doing all of this is to make his home now and forever more with the believer. This is why Jesus makes this promise and it is the fulfilment of a promise as big as the Bible. In the beginning of the Bible God promises in Leviticus 26:11-12, “¹¹ I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. ¹² And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.” Then just before the exile in Jeremiah 30:22 God promises, “And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” Then in the midst of exile in Ezekiel 37:27, “My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Then in the New Testament we see these promises continue to be made in places like our passage in John 14 and 2nd Corinthians 6:16, “For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” And Revelation 21:3, “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.” This is a picture of what it means to be a follower of Christ. Being a follower of Christ does not merely involve doctrine or ethics, although it does certainly involve both of those things, but it also means a real intimate relationship and fellowship with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The result of this fellowship and relationship with God is the fruit of humble obedience. As John would later say in 1st John 2:3, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.”

As this text closes Jesus mercifully gives us an objective test against self-deception. He says in verse 24, “Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.” This is a question we can use to check our own hearts and ask ourselves if we really know Christ. The test isn't, have I prayed a prayer, or have I had a religious experience, or did I grow up in a Christian home? The test is do I keep Jesus's words? Do I obey him? Jesus isn't talking about perfect obedience but rather a heart that desires to obey him and humbly repents and turns from sin when we fall short. This is the test we should be giving ourselves and asking ourselves, do I really love Christ? If we have no desire to follow Christ, no desire to obey his word, no desire to grow in our knowledge and understanding of Christ we should seriously question if we know Jesus at all. However, if our desire is to kill our sin and live in obedience, to know Christ all the more, then we should be greatly encouraged by this promise. For Jesus tells us that as we seek to love and obey him, he promises that we grow in our love and understanding as well.