

The Upper Room (John 14)

John 14.8-11: The Petition of Philip

vv.8-9: The question and answer session moves from Thomas to Philip. It would seem that Philip was asking for a theophany (as did Moses, Exodus 33.18), saying *'Exhibit the Father and we'll be satisfied and content, requiring nothing more.'* It seems that just as Thomas could only think of a *material* place (v.5), Philip could only think in terms of a *physical* sight of the Father. What a misconception! The Lord Jesus had been with his disciples for so long (3.5 years), and yet Philip, at least, had not recognised that the Father was fully declared in the Son! To see Him was to see the Father. All that can be known of the Father is revealed in the Person of His Son. Abraham could declare the *Almighty God* (Genesis 17.1); Moses, the *I Am* (Exodus 3.14); but only the eternal Son could reveal the *heart of the Father*. **Gooding:** *In Him they had seen the Father's heart, mind, character, attitude, words and works fully expressed. Never to all eternity would they discover something different in the heart of God from what the Lord Jesus had shown them.* **AW Pink:** *The corporeal (physical) representation of God, such as Philip desired, was unnecessary; unnecessary because a far more glorious revelation of Deity was there right before him.* **Ryle:** *He that hath thoroughly seen me with the eye of faith, and realized that I am the eternal Son, the Divine Messiah, hath seen as much of my Father, whose express image I am, as mortal man can comprehend.*

v.10: In response to Philip the Lord Jesus speaks of *union, words and works*. **First**, He speaks of His complete identity with the Father ('I am in the Father, and the Father in Me'). There is full communion and unity of mind, will and action. **Second**, and by way of amplification, the Lord Jesus did not speak 'from' (*apo*) Himself. The source of His words was the Father (8.28; 12.49). **Third**, the works He performed were not done independently of the Father and were a perfect revelation of deity (5.36; 10.25, 37-38). To summarise: *The words that I speak to you I speak not independently of the Father; and the works that I do I do not do them independently of the Father. The Father who dwells in Me, speaks in Me and works in Me. What I speak He speaks, and what I work He works. The Father himself has made his home here in my life, and he is saying his words and doing his works by means of me.*

v.11: The disciples, then, were to 'continue to believe' what the Lord had revealed concerning the unity of the Father and Son, yet, if this revelation exceeded their faith and comprehension at that moment, they should, at the very least, believe 'on account of' the evidence of the works they had seen. The miracles in John's gospel are *signs* pointing to Christ (2.11). To believe 'for the works' sake' was the ground of the unenlightened Jews (10.25, 38); the ground on which Nicodemus stood. **John 3.2:** *No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Let us have high thoughts of the Lord Jesus. He is the full revelation of the Father. In our quest for God we cannot go beyond Christ.*

John 14.12-21: The Promise of the Comforter

The Lord Jesus introduces a new subject with the words 'verily, verily' (v.12). He speaks of the believer's *and* His responsibilities in light of His soon return to the Father and coming of the Comforter. The believer is to be marked by *faith and service* (v.12); *prayer* (v.14); *love and obedience* (v.15, 21). The Lord Jesus answers prayer (vv.13-14); prays for the Comforter (v.16) and manifests Himself spiritually to us (vv.18-19, 21). Our responsibilities have not changed.

v.12: This verse contains a remarkable promise. The works of the Father were performed by the Lord Jesus, but He was now going back to heaven. Nevertheless, the disciples would continue to do the works of the Father through the *intercession* of the Son (v.13) and *indwelling* power of the Spirit (v.16). In fact, even 'greater works' (or 'things') would be performed. **MacDonald:** *Doubtless it was to the world-wide proclamation of the gospel, the salvation of so many souls, and the building of the church (Jew and Gentile) that the Lord referred to by the expression greater works.* Note the great *power, great grace and great wonders* described in the book of Acts (4.33; 6.8). The 'greater things' are still the work of the Father (Hebrews 2.4) and His glorified Son (cf. Acts 1.1-2; 9.34), through the power of the Spirit, graciously using mere human servants. **AW Pink:** *'Greater things' in magnitude and importance would exceed the miracles done by Himself and the apostles. What these greater things were it is not difficult to determine. The preaching of a risen and exalted Saviour, the proclaiming of the Gospel to 'every creature', the turning of souls from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the service of the living God.*

vv.13-14: The promise and power of v.12 becomes available through prayer. The 'whatsoever' (v.13) and 'anything' (v.14) is not a blank cheque to expend upon our lusts (James 4.3). We are to pray 'in the name of the Lord Jesus'. This implies acting as His representative; we are given the Son's place before the Father! So, we are to pray and ask as He would; we claim to be acting for Him when we pray in His name. How did He pray? According to one simple guiding principle – the glorification of His Father. John also suggests praying 'in His name' means praying according to the will of

God (1 John 5.14-15). This is the kind of prayer that will be answered! **MacDonald:** *In order to ask in Christ's Name, we must live in close fellowship with Him. Otherwise we would not know His mind. The closer we are to Him, the more our desires will be the same as His are.* The consistent aim of the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry was to bring glory to His Father (5.41; 7.18; 8.50; 12.28). Now, in His exaltation, His purpose has not changed. He answers the prayers of His people and enables them to do 'greater things' in order that He may bring glory to the Father. The promise is repeated in v.14 for emphasis and encouragement.

v.15: This responsibility of love and obedience is closely related to the preceding verses on prayer. Unless the foremost desire of our hearts is to be obedient to His mind and will, our prayers will remain unanswered (1 John 3.22). The **RV** reads: *If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.* **Obedience** is the *necessary consequence* of love. The Lord Jesus has spoken with divine authority (commandments) and unfolded divine revelation piece by piece. We are to 'observe' and 'treasure in the heart' each individual component of that teaching (see 1 John 3.23-24; 4.21; 5.2-3).

v.16: The true disciples of the Lord Jesus will love Him and will keep His commandments (v.15). For this we need divine resources, especially One who will pour out the love of God in our hearts (Romans 5.5). On His part, He will secure for us the promise of the Father – the Comforter. The Lord Jesus 'prayed' or requested (*erotoo*, praying as an equal) the Father that the Spirit be given on the day of Pentecost. And so He was. The Spirit is described here as 'another Comforter'. 'Another' is *allos*, another of the *same kind*. The Spirit is a divine person, of *equal status* to the Lord Jesus. 'Comforter' (*Paraclete*) is one who is 'called alongside' another in order to help, encourage, strengthen and exhort. It is most important to remember that the Spirit is not another Comforter **instead of** the Lord Jesus, but in **addition to** Him. The Lord Jesus was the original Comforter who is now our Advocate (*Paraclete*) in heaven (1 John 2.1). We have a Comforter 'towards the Father' in heaven, and a Comforter (the Spirit) who dwells *within* us on earth. The Lord Jesus was only with His disciples for a brief season, but the Spirit would never leave them. As long as they were on earth, He would be with them. The preposition used here is *meta* – the Spirit would abide in their midst, collectively (cf. 1 Corinthians 3.16).

v.17: The Comforter is further called 'the Spirit of truth' (v.17, cf. 1 John 4.6) as He is the One who *communicates* and *teaches* the truth (14.26). The world, and those who belong to it, cannot *receive*, spiritually *perceive* (see) or *know* by experience (*ginosko*) the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2.14). On the other hand, these disciples knew Him already. They knew Him as He had been manifested in the Person of Christ, and He was presently 'dwelling with (*para*)' or 'alongside' them to help and guide. In the future, however, He would be 'in' them. What a blessing it is to know that every true believer in the Lord Jesus has received the indwelling Spirit at conversion (1 Corinthians 6.19; Romans 8.9).

vv.18-19: The Lord Jesus now explains a glorious truth in relation to the day of the Spirit (the present day of grace). He was leaving them to go to the Father, but He would not leave them 'comfortless' or 'orphans' (cf. James 1.27). The word 'orphans' is especially fitting as He had already called them 'little children' (13.33). They will soon forsake Him (Mark 14.50) and feel helpless and lost, but He would never abandon them! Instead, He would 'come to them'. This is in the present tense, i.e. 'I *am coming* to you'. In what way? The context demands that this is not primarily the resurrection appearances, nor the rapture, but His spiritual coming to them through the Person of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual would replace the physical for the disciples. **WE Vine:** *The Spirit is the minister of Christ. If the Spirit of Christ indwells us, Christ Himself does.* **JND:** *His presence, in spirit, here below, is the consolation of His people. They should see Him (v.19); and this is much more true than seeing Him with the eyes of flesh. Yes, more true; it is knowing Him in a much more real way.* This promise finds its fulfilment in the Holy Spirit indwelling us **individually**, and being present in the midst of the assembly **collectively**. The Lord would soon be withdrawn from the sight of the world – they last saw Him on the cross – but His people still *continue* to 'behold Him' by the Spirit. Because He lives (referring to His risen life), the disciples would also live (future tense). Again this relates to Pentecost and the fullness of spiritual and eternal life they would then enjoy in association with the indwelling Spirit and risen Lord. *Your spiritual life now, and your eternal life hereafter, are both secured by His life. The life of the Head guarantees the life of the members.*