

# Seeing the Father

John 13:31 – 14:14

June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013

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## Introduction

The text we are covering this morning is, to say the least, extraordinary. Often the profoundness of the words of our Lord pass right by us and even still today, much will be impossible for us to comprehend. But before we consider some of the points in our primary text, we need to understand a bit about the Gospel of John and some of the things that make this Gospel unique.

John begins his account of the life of Jesus Christ by laying out a problem...**John 1:18** “No one has seen God at any time”. The reason this is a “problem” is that in John’s language, seeing/ knowing/believing are very closely woven together all throughout, not necessarily interchangeable, but they are very close. And if there is no way to see Him or know Him then, according to Jesus there is no eternal life. (John 17:3)

- **John 2:23** – In contrast to the other Gospels, John refers to the miracles of Jesus as *signs*. not simply demonstrations of power. As signs, these miracles point us to see who Jesus is and forces us to a kind of crisis of decision. We are forced into thinking through just who this Jesus of Nazareth must be. For those who actually “see” or “behold” Him, it is combined with genuine faith and they believe on Him unto life.
- **John 6:40** – Seeing and believing are joined and this reveals that the seeing is not simply a visual experience but it is seeing in such a way that faith or belief in Jesus results. Clearly not everybody who saw Jesus believed.
- **John 11:45** – There were those who saw the things that Jesus did and believed.
- **John 14:7** – *Seeing* Jesus is *believing* in Jesus and is *knowing* Jesus. He also says that *knowing* Jesus is to *know* the Father.
- **John 9** – This entire account of Jesus healing the man born blind is really an ironic story revealing what true sight is and what true knowledge is. The blind man is the one who could see and know Jesus and the religious leaders were actually blind and ignorant of whom Jesus truly was.

## ❖ Old Versus New: God Dwelling With Us

- ◆ How do we understand John’s usage of the word God in 1:18? There are times in the Scriptures where the word “God” refers to the Godhead...all three Persons of the Trinity. Other times, the word God refers to the Father, the first person of the Trinity. But John seems to be making a clear distinction between the persons of the Trinity. In John 1:1-2, the Word is with God, the Word is God but is distinct from God. We understand this to be referring to the first and second Persons of the Trinity.
- ◆ In John 1:18 is John just describing the invisible attribute of God? To be certain, the Scriptures teach us that God is invisible. (Colossians 1:15-16; 1 Timothy 1:17). But John’s remark seems to have as its foundation a progressive nature of God revealing salvation. Here’s how...first John calls us back to remember how the law was given through Moses on Mount Sinai. Moses spent 40 days and nights on the mountain with God but still was not seeing God in the way that John has in mind here.
- ◆ Then, in John 1:14, John teaches that God the Word dwelt among us. This is not the first time that God has “dwelt” or literally “pitched a tent” or “tabernacled”. It is as though John is telling us that God was dwelling with us in a new way and without doubt, God had never dwelt like this with His people—this time, God became one of us. (consider Exodus 40:34-38 & 1 Kings 8:10-11)

## ❖ Jesus the Way; The Father the Destination

- ◆ In our primary text, we have a conversation between Jesus and His disciples just after Judas has left the group. Obviously Judas’ betraying actions would quickly set in motion his arrest, trial, scourging and execution. So these are the final teachings of Jesus to his friends and He tells them that He is leaving (13:33) and will only be with them a little while longer. Further, He tells them where He’s going they cannot come—at least not yet (13:36).
- ◆ Their hearts should not be troubled. Even though He’s going away, He’s not abandoning them. Part of this same discourse with the disciples is the fact that the Holy Spirit will be coming *because* He is leaving. (John 16:5-11)
- ◆ But where is He going? Jesus says that He is going to the Father and the Father’s house. Interestingly, Jesus tells His disciples that they already know where He is going and that they *know the way*. This prompts a couple of questions from the disciples. Thomas says” Lord, we do not know where you are going and how can we know the way.” (14:5-6)
- ◆ Jesus explains that *He is the way to the Father* and *He is also manifesting the way of the Father*. In response to the questions of the disciples Jesus explains that He is able to be the way to the Father and to be the revelation of the Father because the Father is in Him and He is in the Father. They mutually indwell each other and we learn elsewhere that the Holy Spirit indwells them as well. The Trinity is the backbone of John’s writing and the is an essential truth of the Gospel.

- ◆ The disciples see Jesus, they know Jesus and He explains that they have therefore seen the Father and know the Father. The works of Jesus are the works of the Father. The words of Jesus are the words of the Father. John's problem verse in 1:18 is resolved...we can now see the Father, we can now know the Father by seeing and knowing the Son. The Son has perfectly "declared" or "exposited" the Father.
- ◆ Our journey is one where we are led to the Father. The way to the Father is the Son...the Father is the destination and the Son is the pathway to get there. We can understand this analogy well enough, but Jesus' answer to Phillip's question (14:8-11) is where we get into even deeper water. This depth is to realize that the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father so it is as if, once we are on the road (the Son) we are already at our destination (the Father). To see and know the Son is to see and know the Father. This should blow your mind.
- ◆ The tension in John's "problem" of 1:18 is resolved here. Now God the Son has been seen and God the Father has been seen. The words, works, and character of the Father are perfectly declared by Jesus.

#### ❖ Conclusion

- ◆ The Trinity is essential to John's writing but, more importantly, the Trinity is essential to the Gospel. Jesus teaches us that eternal life is found in knowing the Son who reveals the Father all of which is by faith bestowed by the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is not some high-level theology to be debated by Bible scholars—it is the heart of the Gospel and without it there is no salvation.
- ◆ If we do not know the Father, we have no life. If the Son has come but has not shown us the Father, then we have no life. But we do have life because the Father is in the Son and seeing the Son is seeing the Father.
- ◆ A modern theologian said, *"To say that Jesus is God is of course to make a startling statement about Jesus. It is also to make a stupendous claim about God."*