

## John Chapter 14

In Chapter 13 of this gospel, we read much of the failures of two men – Judas and Peter. But now in chapter 14, we move into a ministry which is much more positive and encouraging. The Lord is about to go away, and hence He must leave words of encouragement for His own. In I Corinthians 13, Paul speaks of three lovely words – faith, hope, and charity or love. We can see these three in the opening verses of this chapter. The Lord begins with the heart, then moves on to faith (“believe also in Me), before coming to hope – “I will come again and receive you unto Myself”

So first of all the heart is comforted. “Let not your heart be troubled”. When we think of the circumstances, and what lay before the Lord that night and the day to come, His words of comfort are all the more remarkable. We might have thought that He was the one who needed comfort. Instead, He gives it to His disciples. In chapter 11, He was troubled in His body when He shed tears of sorrow at the grave of Lazarus. “He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled”. He has considered the Cross in John 12 and said, “Now is my soul troubled”. He has broken the news of His betrayal in John 13 and there we read, “He was troubled in spirit”. These things in His most recent past touched Him deeply. Much more was awaiting Him during His trial and crucifixion. But the Lord is now thinking of the fear and anxiety that would overtake His disciples and hence He says, “Let not your heart be troubled”. Truly it is an example of what Paul wrote of later in Phil 2, He “thought not on His own things, but also on the things of others”. He put others first, before Himself.

Secondly in verse 1, He touches upon their faith. “Ye believe in God”. That was the foundation stone of every Jew, that which distinguished him from the heathen all around him. The Jew had a belief in the one true God. But now the Lord moves their faith one step further. “Believe also in Me”. This was another claim on His part to deity. Men believe in God – the Jews were never asked to believe in Moses, or David, or Elijah – faith is based on God alone. Their faith in Him was to be on equal standing as their faith in God. Men today are sometimes heard speaking about their God. The Christian can also speak about His Lord. Romans 10:9 says, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”. So the disciples’ faith was to rest now upon God and upon His Son.

Now in verse 2, we have the Christian’s hope. “In my Father’s house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you”. We have already come across the Father’s house in this gospel. In John 2, the Lord said of the temple in Jerusalem, “Make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise”. In John chapter 4, the Lord indicates that the temple in Jerusalem would no longer be the place of worship. He says to the Samaritan woman at the well, “The hour cometh when we shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father”. So, neither of these locations would be the places where would men worship God. The Lord tells the woman, “The true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth”. It is remarkable that the Lord chose to have this conversation, not with the proud Pharisee, Nicodemus, in chapter 3. Here was a rich ruler of the Jews, yet the Lord’s word for him is, “Ye must be born again”. The Lord visits the temple again in Matthew 21. He finds the temple in an even worse condition than it had been before.

So here in chapter 14, the Father’s house is no longer on earth, but in heaven. The Lord abandoned the house on earth after He had visited it again during His last week on earth. In Matthew 21:13, He described it as a “den of thieves”, and He tells His disciples that a day would come when not one stone would be left upon another. This

was fulfilled in AD 70 when Titus destroyed the city. He goes on to say in Matthew in Matt 23:38, "Your house is left unto you desolate". It is no longer "My Father's house" but "your house". The Lord cast men out of the earthly house, but now in John 14, He is going to receive men into the heavenly house.

The Father's house of John 14 is obviously heaven, so why didn't He just call it "heaven"? We know very little of what heaven will be like, but the Father's house suggests a place of warmth, affection, and rest. It also allows us to take the liberty of comparing this house with another father's house in Luke 15. The story of the returning prodigal is of course only a parable, but can the welcome we will receive to the heavenly house be any less than that offered to the prodigal or profligate son of Luke 15. We can see the following :-

## **1. A Father's welcome**

His father ran, fell upon his neck, and kissed him. Surely we also can expect a Father's welcome. Many will tell us that we will never see the Father in heaven but only the Lord Jesus. They would refer us to John 1:18 as the proof of this. "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him". This may indeed suggest at first sight that we shall never see God, but surely there is a qualifying statement in the verse – "at any time". No man in the flesh could ever hope to see God and live. But what if we were no longer in the flesh? – beyond the limitation of time. Let us look at various facts on both sides of the argument.

### **1.1. God is spirit (John chapter 4)**

Does this mean therefore that God is invisible? Well, in Heb 1:14, we read there of angels who are ministering spirits, and the Bible is full of angelic appearances, when they were seen by men.

### **1.2. The invisible God (Colossians chapter 1)**

Col 1 says that Christ is the "image of the invisible God". So is this not conclusive? God is invisible. Well we look at the Greek word for invisible and discover that it is simply the opposite of the word "seen" ie He is the unseen God. Christ is the image, not of a God who cannot be seen, but of a God who is unseen.

### **1.3. The form of God**

Does God have a body that we can see? In Matt 18, we learn of the angels that they do always behold the face of the Father who is in heaven ". In Rev 5, John sees a book in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne. Moses saw His back in the cleft of the rock. So, God has a body just like us, and this shouldn't surprise us for we are made in the image and likeness of God. (Gen 1)

### **1.4. Sightings of God**

There are a number of times when men were able to look upon God, though it was not in the flesh but in visions ie not in the realm of time.

In Rev 4 and 5, John looks and sees Him who sat upon the throne and speaks of Him in both chapters. In Daniel Ch 7, the prophet sees the Ancient of Days sitting upon His throne as the Lord, the Son of Man, approaches Him.

Job, too, no less than 3 times over speaks of his great hope that one day he would see God – "yet in my flesh shall I see God". "Whom I shall see for myself....mine eyes

shall behold Him and not another”.

### **1.5. Our nearness to God**

In Luke Ch 1, Gabriel says of himself “I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God”. Gabriel is one of the very few angels named in the Bible. He appears on 3 special occasions. To announce to Daniel the great prophecy of the 70 weeks, to announce to Zacharias the birth of John the Baptist, then to announce to Mary the birth of the Lord Jesus. Gabriel uses a Greek word ENOPION to describe his position - in the presence of God.

But in Eph 1:4, Paul says of us Christians that we are before Him in love. Before is KATENOPION which means “hard up against” or “in His immediate presence.” We are nearer to God today than even the highest angels in heaven. What we are doctrinally today, we shall be in reality in a day to come.

### **2. The provisions of the house**

In the far country, the prodigal would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat. It was this that brought him to his senses. In his father’s house, he thought, there was bread enough and to spare. God never gives anything in measure. When the Lord fed 5,000 in the wilderness, there were 12 baskets filled with the fragments that remained. When 4,000 were fed, there were 7 baskets filled with the fragments.

But when the prodigal came to the house, he ate, not bread but the fatted calf. It was not just a fat calf, but a fatted calf ie one which had been prepared for this very occasion.

### **3. The garments of the house**

The prodigal received the best robe, a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet – he exchanged the rags of the far country for the best robe in his father’s house.

One day the Church will be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. The ring is often used as a seal of approval and authority. In the book of Esther, Mordecai was given the king’s ring and this allowed him to act on his behalf. We are the representatives of the Father. For our shoes, we are shod with the gospel of peace.

### **4. Our position in the house**

As the prodigal was returning home, he was rehearsing his little speech. “I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son – make me as one of thy hired servants”. But when he got home, he was able to get out only half his speech “ I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son”. But the father interrupted him to say, “This my son was dead and is alive, was lost and is found”. Today, we Christians are not just servants but sons. The prodigal would have been content to be a hired servant. I think it would have been better to have been a servant than a hired servant. A servant, though a slave, would be given food, clothing, and shelter by his master. A hired servant had no such security and might often have starved. But the father received the prodigal as a son. The prodigal wasn’t given the opportunity to say “Make me as.... ”

We of course, are sons of God. A servant knoweth not what his master doeth, but we can enter into the thoughts and feelings of the Father. We are sons who serve. Paul said of Timothy, “As a son with a father, he hath served with me in the gospel”.

Romans 8:14 also tells us "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God".

## **5. The joy of the house**

What will it be like to enjoy the laughter of the Father's house? Luke 15 tells us again – "They began to be merry". Luke Ch 10 tells us that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth". How much more, when the Father receives into His house the countless millions of the saved.

The joy for us can begin here of course. In Luke Ch 10, the Lord said, "Rejoice rather for your names are written in heaven". This is the joy of eternal security. Two hands are holding us fast – those of the Father and the Son- and we are also of course part of the family of God - a relationship that cannot be broken.

We can know too the joy of salvation. Remember the joy of the Ethiopian eunuch – he went on his way rejoicing. And what about knowing something of the Lord's joy – the joy of divine revelation. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank Thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes".

What joy there will be in the Father's house when all of the above come to fulfilment.

When will we enter the Father's house? It will be at the Rapture: as the Lord says, " I will come again and receive you unto Myself". This is how it is put in the AV but I believe the verb tenses are slightly different. The Lord said, "I am coming again and will receive you unto Myself". The words "I am coming" give a far greater sense of urgency, of certainty, and immediacy than "I will come". He could be coming soon.

We note also here the distinctions between the Lord's coming for His Church and His coming for Israel. When He comes for the nation of Israel, we read, "He shall send His angels, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds". He delegates this task to angels, but when He comes for His church, He says, "I will come again", and in I Thess 4 Paul says, "The Lord Himself shall descend".

We could also at this point make distinctions between the two comings of the Lord Jesus. There are very few references to what we call the Rapture in the New Testament. The Lord hints at it in John 11. "He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die". He expands on the subject here in John 14, and Paul takes us further still in I Thess 4. But all other references to His coming are not for us but for Israel. Whenever we read of the coming of the Son of man, we can assuredly say that He is coming for Israel. A true distinction in this respect would save us from the errors of the church going through the Tribulation, or of partial rapture.

So, what can we learn about Christians who have gone on before us? They are not in the Father's house but in Paradise. The promise to the thief in Luke 23 was, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise". Paul describes what I believe to be his own experience when he was left for dead at Lystra. He was caught up into the third heaven, into Paradise, he saw "visions and revelations of the Lord", and heard unspeakable words. Paradise must be a wonderful place, for Eden is described as the garden of God. If the garden is wonderful, how much better will be the house. Every year the Queen holds a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Hundreds are invited and they count it a privilege to be there. But few, if any, are invited into the Palace to dine with the Queen there. Saints who are presently in the garden will one day join us in the house.

Those saints too who are now in the garden are incomplete. Their souls and their spirits are with Christ, but their bodies remain on earth till the day of resurrection. Those who will enter the house will have already experienced resurrection and will

have bodies of glory, just like His: bodies which are eternal, bodies which are incorruptible, bodies which will know of no limitation, bodies which are recognizable just as the disciples recognised the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus. The Lord's prayer in John 17 will have been answered, "I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory. For Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world". Eternal glory and eternal love will be on display.

So, are we heading for one of those "many mansions" of verse 2? Those mansions already existed. The Lord says "are" many mansions, but He continues, "I go to prepare a place for you". I can only make the suggestion, but are those many mansions are the abodes of those many families in heaven and earth that Paul speaks of in Eph 3. Could there be something better than a mansion? The Lord speaks of a place. It is the diminutive form of the word ie a little place. This does not necessarily mean a small or insignificant place. It could also mean "a special place", in the same way that He described His disciples in chapter 13 as His "little children".

In verse 5 we have the first of three interruptions from a disciple in this chapter. Thomas is first, followed by Philip in verse 8, and Judas, not Iscariot, in verse 22. The questions and the replies all add to our understanding of the Lord's ministry. Thomas makes a statement first, "We know not whither Thou goest", then asks a question, "And how can we know the way?". This is his response to the proceeding words of the Saviour in verse 4, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know". The Lord has told them where He is going – to the Father's house – so there is no need to elaborate on that point. But He does speak further regarding "the way". The Lord replies, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me". He says three things about Himself. "I am the way". In Matthew 7:14, the Lord speaks of a narrow way which leads unto life. The way is there described as a road. Now, in John 14, the way is a Person, the Lord Himself. But He is not just a way, He is the way, for there is no other way apart from Him. The end of verse 6 states, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me". Christianity is an exclusive religion. It allows only one way of salvation. So called Christian leaders of our generation have fellowship with Jews, Moslems, and Budhists etc, but if they truly believed the Bible, they would know that these other religions are but part of the broad way, leading to destruction. In John 10, the Lord said, "I am the door. By Me if any man enters in, he shall be saved". Paul later writes, "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus".

The Lord is also the truth. Truth is embodied in Him. In verse 2 He says of the Father's house, "If it were not so, I would have told you". He not only speaks the truth, He is the truth. In John chapter 1, we read that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". He told Pilate at His trial in John 18:37, "For this cause came I into this world, that I should bear witness unto the truth". Little wonder then that in Rev 3:14, the Lord describes Himself as "the true and faithful witness".

Last of all, He is "the Life". Physical life comes from Him. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:4)". He is also the giver of eternal life. In John 10, He said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish". The life He gives to those who believe in Him is far greater than that enjoyed by natural men. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10)". But He not only gives life, He is the very epitome of what life is. He is all, and more, that Adam should have been. He is the word of life (I John 1), the very expression of all that life is.

From verses 7 to 11, He is going to speak of how He has revealed the Father to the disciples already. Verse 7 reads, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him". This brings out the second interruption from Philip this time in verse 8. "Lord, show us the Father and

it sufficeth us". The Lord's reply is that he who has seen Him has seen the Father, for the Father and the Son are as one. The revealing of the Father was the Lord's great purpose in coming to earth. John 1:18 says, "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. The Lord did this in two ways – by His words and by His works. The words He spoke were not His own, but the words which the Father had given Him. In John 17:8, the Lord prays, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me". He also spoke of His works as the Father's works. "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do. What things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise". The Son only but copied the works He saw His Father doing. So, by listening to the words of the Saviour and seeing His works, we can get a perfect picture of who the Father is. We form this picture as we read in the gospels the life of our blessed Lord. It is good to know that when we meet the Father in His house, we shall not be meeting a stranger.

From verses 12 to 15, The Lord now turns His attention to His disciples, and the works that they would do, and the prayers that they would offer after His departure. Firstly, in verse 12, He says about the man who believes in Him, "The works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father". After His departure, the disciples went forth, were able to heal the sick, cast out demons, and even raise the dead. As to their works being greater than the Lord's, He was perhaps thinking of the extent of their ministry compared to His. He restricted His ministry to Israel, they went out into all the world.

Verses 13 and 14 deal with the disciples' prayer life. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it". The question is often asked, should we address the Father or the Son in our prayers. Well the Lord, in what has become known as "the Lord's prayer", taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father". And here in John 14, prayer is not to be directed to Him the Son but, as He says, "In My name". There is no doubt that in the epistles, Paul prayed to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ in Ephesians 1, and to the Father of our Lord Jesus in Ephesians 3. The first recorded prayer of the Church is in Acts 4 where they prayed, "Lord, thou art God". That they were praying to God the Father is evident from the words, "against Thy holy child Jesus". The acknowledged pattern of prayer then in the church was to the Father, in the name of the Son. Doubtless, there were moments of crisis when some addressed the Lord personally. See the examples of Stephen in Acts 7 who said, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit", and also Paul who besought the Lord three times that the thorn in the flesh might be removed from him. But these latter were personal prayers in moments of extremity and not I believe to be the norm.

It has often been pointed out that "in my name" is not merely a form of words but prayer which is offered in keeping with the character of our Lord Jesus Himself. If we pray thus, there is not only the promise that the prayer will be answered but that the Father will be "glorified in the Son". We might sometimes think that we could never add to the glory of God, yet here is one way. By prayers being offered and answered in the name of the Lord Jesus, the Father is glorified. During these last few hours the Son was on earth, the Father heard the insults and taunts heaped upon His Son. The cry is still going up from earth, "We will not have this to reign over us". How wonderful for the Father though to hear men of earth praying in the name of the Lord Jesus and thus acknowledging His authority. Those 4 beasts in heaven each have a vial full of odours which are the prayers of saints. Our prayers are the sweet perfume of heaven. Verse 15 speaks briefly of the disciples' love. The proof of their love will be seen in their keeping of His commandments. More will be said on this matter in verse 21.

The disciples might well be thinking how they could do such things, especially later when the Lord was taken from them. But in verse 16, He gives them the promise of

divine help. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever". The Lord's time with His disciples was brief – just over 3 years in all. Now though, another Comforter, a divine Person just like Himself, would come to be not only with them for ever, but in them for ever. The word "another" is "another of the same kind". There is a different word in Greek which means "another of a different kind". Both words are used in Galatians chapter 1. Paul speaks of "another gospel which is not another". We can paraphrase this as "another gospel of a different kind which is not another of the same kind". There is only one gospel.

John 14 is the first mention of the Comforter. The Greek word is "paraklete" and means one called alongside to help. There is someone else by our side, the Spirit of God. The Spirit came to give power and skill to men in the Old Testament, but He was never sent to dwell in them, and certainly not for ever. Subsequent verses will elaborate on the work of the Spirit, but verse 17 describes Him only as the Spirit of truth. The Lord had said of Himself in verse 6 of this chapter, "I am the way, the truth, and the life". He was the truth, and if the disciples wanted to know the truth, they only had to go to Him and ask. Thus on occasions, they would go and ask Him, "Show us the meaning of these parables". Soon, He would be gone, but the Spirit would be able to teach them and instruct them just as He had done Himself. A contrast is made between the world and the believers. It is said of the Spirit, "whom the world cannot receive". It is an impossibility for the world to receive the Spirit for it sees Him not, nor knows Him. That is why men cannot understand spiritual things for they are spiritually discerned. There are many things that the world cannot do. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3)." Regarding heaven, the Lord said to the Jews in John 7:34, "Whither I go, ye cannot come".

The Lord throughout this part of John's gospel will speak again and again about His going away. After His death, the Lord never once appeared to His enemies. He could so easily have vindicated Himself but He appeared only to His disciples. The great day of His vindication is yet to come. But after the Lord had gone back to heaven the disciples might well have begun to feel alone and destitute. How will they manage without Him? In verse 18, the Lord says, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you". The Greek word for comfortless is "orphanos", from which we get our English word "orphans". I will not leave you as orphans, you are not being abandoned. "I will come to you". But how could He come to them if He was about to leave them and go back to heaven? In verse 21, He is going to manifest Himself. In verse 23, He is going to abide in them. But first of all, there are conditions to be fulfilled on our part.

Verse 20 is unusual. He says, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you". Previously in verse 11 He had said, "Believe Me that I am in my Father, and the Father in Me". In verse 11 it was a matter for faith, but when the Spirit comes, we shall know these things as a certainty.

Let's look at verse 21. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, He it is that loveth Me". We can speak much about love, but love is truly manifested by our actions rather than by our words. In the case of our love for Christ, it is proved by having and keeping our commandments. We can read His commandments and therefore know them, but we must go further and keep them. In Chapter 13 of this gospel, the Lord says to the disciples about the feet washing, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them". Adherence to the word of God and love have sometimes been regarded as opposite extremes. One man is legal, another is loose. But where does the truth lie? It is in neither of these two expressions. The one indeed must be seen as going hand-in-hand with the other. In Phil 1, Paul prays for the saints, "that your love may abound in knowledge and in all discernment". In I Cor 13, that great chapter about love, Paul says that "love rejoiceth in the truth". The beloved disciple John writes in his epistle, "I have no greater joy than that my children walk in

truth". Love and truth must go together. And what are the blessings for the Christian by keeping His commandments? The Saviour continues, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him". We can be assured of divine love towards us, the love of the Father and the Son. God loves us all the time, but there is a special love reserved for those who obey Him, just as an earthly father would love his obedient children more than those who were disobedient. The Lord loved all His disciples, but there were those three occasions when He took Peter, James, and John to be particularly close to Himself.

And not only will there be love, but the Lord will manifest Himself to the obedient Christian. Obedience always leads to further revelation. In Genesis 12, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said, "Get thee out...to a land that I will tell thee of". Abraham obeyed, but only in part. His father Terah went with him, and they only came as far as Haran. It was only after Terah had died that Abraham finally moved on into Canaan. This further act of obedience led to God giving him a new revelation concerning the land. God now spoke about "the land which I shall give thee". Before he had only promised that God would show him the land, now God was going to give it to him. Here in John 14, it is a further revelation of the person of Christ. "I will manifest myself to him". In Phil 3, Paul has already judged the flesh in his life. What things were once gain to him, he now counted loss for Christ. Having removed such things from his life, he is able to speak of the great ambitions of his life – to know Him and the power of His resurrection etc. Paul's obedience led to the prospect of a deeper knowledge of Christ. And what of our day? Do we not know saints who seem to have a deeper knowledge of the Lord than we do? What is their secret? No doubt it is an obedient spirit to the commandments of the Lord.

The thought of manifestation brings out the third and final interruption of this chapter. In verse 22, it is the turn of Judas, not Iscariot, to ask for further enlightenment. The mention of this second Judas reminds us of the many pairings amongst the disciples. Thus we have two called Simon, Simon Peter and Simon the zealot. We have two called James – the brother of John and son of Zebedee, and James the son of Alphaeus. We also have two called Judas – Judas Iscariot and a second Judas, the brother of James and son of Alphaeus. We also have three pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John, and James and Judas. It is this other Judas, not Iscariot, who speaks in verse 22. "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world. Incidentally, this other Judas uses the title "Lord", something which Judas Iscariot failed to do in Matthew 26 when he asks, "Master (or teacher), is it I?" When we think of manifestation, we are thinking of far more than His appearances in resurrection. We are thinking now of what has been happening in the lives of saints for the past 2,000 years.

The Lord responds in verse 23, "If a man love Me, He will keep My words". In verse 21, the Lord spoke about His commandments. In verse 23, it is His words. What's the difference? We can see the difference in an experience of David. He once sighed, "Oh for a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem". Three of his mighty men heard David's sigh and responded. They fought their way down to the well through the midst of David's enemies and fought their way back again. If David had commanded them to do so, they would have done the same, for they would have obeyed him. But this was not a commandment – it was but a longing expressed in a sigh, and their love for David led to their action. These three men were the epitome of what the Lord is saying here, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words".

Again, for the Christian who lives by this precept, there is a double blessing. Not just divine love and the Lord's manifestation of Himself, but divine love and the abiding presence in us of divine persons. "My Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him". The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in every believer is not



optional. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His". But the Lord is now going much further here. We can, if we love His words, be the abiding place of both Father and Son. The word for abode in this verse is the word used for "mansion" in verse 2. It brings in the wonderful thought, it is as if the Father and Son can't wait to see us in that heavenly house – they want to abide with us today. What a wonderful prospect too for the Lord – it is written of Him in this gospel that He "tabernacled" amongst us ie that He pitched His tent amongst us a pilgrim and a stranger. He had nowhere on earth to lay down His head – no abiding place of His own. But now, in the same world that rejected Him, He can find abiding places in us. Paul has the same thought in his prayer for the Ephesians in chapter 3. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith". The verb "to dwell" is not here "to tabernacle" but to dwell in a house ie in a permanent dwelling place. What rewards indeed there are for the obedient child of God today.

The opposite condition for a Christian to be in is stated in verse 24. "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings". We need to be wary of the Christian who speaks much of love and grace, yet is unwilling to bow to His words. The Lord is here saying that love and disobedience to His word cannot live together. He in fact elevates the authority of His own word in the second part of this verse, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent Me". To disregard His word is to disregard the Father's.

The Lord's thoughts in the last few verses in the chapter are centred on His going away. He leaves them three things – a Comforter, peace, and joy. Firstly in verse 26, He elaborates on the work of the Comforter, whom He says, "The Father will send in My name". In this verse, it is the Father who sends the Comforter. In Chapter 15:26, it is Himself who sends the Comforter, and in the very same verse, it is the Comforter "which proceedeth from the Father". All three Persons of the Trinity are involved in the coming of the Spirit. And what will He do for us when He comes? "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance". He is our divine instructor. If we allow Him to teach us, He will lead us into all truth. This is what distinguishes the child of God from the mere religious professor. For all his supposed learning, the empty professor cannot come to a knowledge of divine truth. His reasonings are earthly and carnal and soon lead him to deny the truths of the Bible. In I Cor 2:9, Paul is speaking of the natural man or unsaved man, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him". But we must not stop here, for we are not part of this statement. Rather, we continue with Paul, "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit".

In the final part of verse of John 14:26, the Lord says something which is specific to the disciples. "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you". If we take John's gospel alone, it is remarkable to think that it was written perhaps 60 years after the events took place. Yet just think of chapters 13 to 16. They describe in detail an almost continuous monologue between the Lord and His disciples, and chapter 17 is the account of a lengthy prayer He makes to the Father. Can we remember the details of a conversation we had yesterday? We may remember the salient points but could we recall every word? Yet here in John we have a word for word account of a conversation that took place sixty years previously. It could only be remembered by the work of the Holy Spirit. Think too of the first three gospels. Only the first was written by an apostle and even he describes events where he was not present. And where did Mark and Luke get the details about which they wrote. True, others might have passed on their experiences, but surely not in the details that we find in their gospels. Nor do all four writers merely record events in a historical order. They did not write biographies of Christ. Each gave his account in keeping with the purpose of the Holy Spirit to tell us of the King, the Servant, the Man, and the Son of God.

In verse 27, the Lord now leaves them peace. But not just any peace. As He says, "My peace give I unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you". The peace of the world is dependent upon circumstances. Peace is often no more than the absence of unrest. The Lord knew little of the absence of disturbance in His life. He was frequently mobbed by the multitude, all clamouring for His attention. Sometimes He was surrounded by men seeking to find fault with Him, with His words, and with His deeds. "He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself", and there are upwards of thirty such occasions recorded in the four gospels. No, the peace of the Lord Jesus stemmed from His relationship with the Father. "He that sent Me is with Me, the Father hath not left Me alone". It was peace beyond mere circumstances. Thus He could continue all night in prayer to God. He could fall asleep in the boat in spite of the storm. Even before Pilate and Herod, He could maintain a quiet dignity. His was an inner peace.

And we can know this peace in a practical way, but only by fulfilling the conditions of Phil 4:6-9. We have to bring our anxieties in prayers and supplications to God, and leave them there. We have to bring them with thanksgiving. That is the hardest part. Are we able to thank God for every circumstance we are in, even the most difficult. If we can pray with thanksgiving, then we can begin to see the divine purpose behind the circumstance, and perhaps begin to understand why God is bringing us that way. If we can do this, then the promise will come true, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus". More is to follow in verse 8. We are to fill our minds with things which are honest, just, pure etc and the promise is then even greater, "The God of peace shall be with you". The Lord Jesus knew this peace in His life, and here He gives it to His disciples. Now the words of the opening verse of this chapter are repeated, "Let not your heart be troubled", and He adds, "Neither let it be afraid".

In the middle of verse 28, the Lord says something that the disciples would find difficult to understand. "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father". How could they rejoice at His departure ? If we had a long-standing colleague at work who suddenly announced that he was leaving to move on to a higher position, we would of course be sorry to see him go, yet if we were a true friend, we would also be happy for him, to see him being recognised for his true worth. This is surely what the Lord has in mind here, when He adds, "For My Father is greater than I". The Lord has gone to a higher place.

In chapter 13, He told them about the betrayal of Judas, so that when it came to pass, they would believe. Now He repeats these very words about His own departure. He is telling them now that nothing that is about to happen has taken Him unawares. They would be overcome by events, but the Lord had all things under His control. Circumstances are indeed now gathering pace. "The prince of this world cometh". But only the Lord could add, "And hath nothing in Me". There was nothing in the Person of the Lord Jesus that could respond to the wicked one with all his wiles. The devil is here called "the prince of this world" for he is going to move men to have that final opposition to the Lord that would eventually lead to Calvary.

Verse 31 concludes the chapter. He wants to put the record straight before the events take place. He is entering into circumstances so that the world might know that He loves the Father and also in obedience to the commandment which the Father has given Him.

This marks the end of what has become known as "the upper room ministry" for He says, "Arise, let us go hence". The words which we find in chapters 15 to 17 must then have spoken on that journey between the upper room and the garden of Gethsemane.