

# “Knowing Father, Son, and Spirit”

John 14.7–14

<sup>7</sup>“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”

<sup>8</sup>Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”<sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?<sup>10</sup>Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.<sup>11</sup>Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.<sup>12</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.<sup>13</sup>Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.<sup>14</sup>If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”  
[NASB]

HOPE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Rev. Chris Robinson

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## I. Introduction

### A. *Objections and Replies*

Jesus continues His discourse in the upper room. Perhaps you’ve noticed how He is adeptly leveraging their objections to drive His disciples to the core of this engagement. First it was Peter objecting to Jesus washing our feet. Jesus replied, <sup>13.8</sup>“If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Union with Christ requires being cleansed by Christ.

Then it was Judas Iscariot objecting to the union of Divine and Human natures in the Person of Christ. Jesus replied, <sup>13.27</sup>“What you do, do quickly.” Satan had entered Judas and Judas betrayed Jesus. Union with Christ requires being separated from Satan.

Then again it was Peter objecting to Jesus being our *only* Savior—the *only* Lamb who must lay down His life to take away the sins of the world—the *only* Lover of souls who can liberate us to love others. Jesus replied, <sup>13.38</sup>“Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.” Union with Christ requires being loved by Christ.

And then it was Thomas objecting to Jesus demanding we give up all attempts to figure out how to get ourselves to heaven. Jesus replied, <sup>14.6</sup>“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” Union with Christ requires being abandoned to Christ.

Now it is Philip objecting to Jesus sufficiently satisfying our need to know God. Jesus replies, <sup>9</sup>“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” Union with Christ requires being given spiritual knowledge of Christ’s unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

### B. *Two Troubling Prospects*

There ultimately are two and only two troubling prospects in the world. One is to be near to God while you are still under the Law as a Covenant of Works. That is, to be near God and not have Jesus. As a descendant of Adam you are born into the Covenant of Works that God made with Adam as representative of all mankind. You are born subject to all the requirements of the Law, which are summarized in the Ten Commandments. Any guilt of breach—whether your own breach or the breach of your representative (Adam)—brings upon you the sanctions of the Law. The Law must be satisfied, justice must be served—we are born subject to death and eternal torment poured out by the Most Holy God upon those who sin and rebel against Him. It is very troubling to be near God while you are still under the Law as a Covenant of Works, to be near God and not have the Son of God.

The other troubling prospect is to feel far from God when you are under the Covenant of Grace. That is, to have Jesus and feel far from Him. This is the covenant God made from all eternity with His Son, and with all who God chose in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.<sup>eph1.4</sup> In this covenant God’s Son receives the Law’s penalty according to justice that we deserve for our sin. At the same time, we receive the account of Jesus’ obedience and satisfaction of the Law, and the great benefit of eternal life in heaven.

After God transfers us from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace, it is very troubling to feel as if the One into whom we were transferred is far away. He is our salvation, He is our safety, He is our hope, He is our life, He is our desire. It is troubling to feel far from the One in whom alone all true comfort is found.

### **C. One United Resolution**

The next four chapters of this Gospel lay down for us the resolution to these two troubling prospects. This resolution has two parts. One part is the eternal unity among the three Persons of the triune Godhead. This is not properly a *union* if by union you mean the bonding together of three independent entities. <sup>Dt6.4</sup>“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” This is by no means a union of three Gods. Our God is eternally One. There is but one only, the living and true God. <sup>wsc5</sup> Yet there are three Persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. <sup>wsc6</sup> Thus Christ commands us to baptize disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. <sup>Mt28.19</sup>

The other part of the resolution is the union between Christ and His disciples. While that union was intended from all eternity, it becomes effective only when an elect sinner is cleansed once for all by Christ, separated forever from Satan, and by faith receives Christ’s sacrificial love and abandons himself to Christ. Christ has shown us the *way* to heaven: He has shown us Himself. Christ has shown us the *truth* of who God our Savior is: He has shown us Himself. And Christ has shown us what it is to know God, which is *life*: He has shown us Himself.

These two—unity among the Persons of the Triune God and union between Christ and the elect—underlie the perfect and only resolution to the only two troubling prospects in the world. We’ll begin this four-chapter view of unity and union by observing three things in today’s verses: Christ’s marvelous receipt of unbelief, His divine requirement for belief, and the glorious result of belief.

## **II. Marvelous Receipt of Unbelief**

First, Christ marvelously receives our unbelief. One of the hardest things to believe is how Jesus receives our unbelief. <sup>7</sup>“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” <sup>8</sup>Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” <sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup>Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?”

### **A. Two ways we amaze Jesus**

#### **1. Unbelief**

There are two ways that we amaze Jesus. One is our unbelief and the other is our belief. Does it amaze you that you can amaze Jesus? When Jesus was teaching in the synagogue of His hometown Nazareth, His own family and friends took offense at Him. <sup>Mk6.5NIV</sup>“He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. <sup>6</sup>And he was *amazed* at their lack of faith.” Jesus was amazed at their unbelief.

What greater opposition to God is there than unbelief? Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The root of all evil is unbelief in Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Adam chose to believe the lies of the serpent rather than to believe the Word of God. We’ve been doing that ever since.

Every opposition to Jesus—and thus to God—is grounded in unbelief that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Sin is following a different way, which is a wide path leading to destruction; a different truth, which is no truth at all; and a different life without Jesus, which is to have no life at all. Do you have unbelief yet residing in you? Insofar as you do—and we all do, so long as we are on this earth—the unbelief in you is the fountain of all opposition to God, all resistance to His mercy, all discontentment with His providence, all disobedience to His commands.

## 2. *Belief*

The other way we amaze Jesus is with our belief. Does it amaze you that you can amaze Jesus? A Roman centurion had a dear servant who was dying. This man could command soldiers to come and go, but he could not command sickness to flee. He believed in Jesus. He believed that Jesus could command sickness to flee as easily as he could command soldiers. <sup>Lk7.9NIV</sup>When Jesus heard this, he was *amazed* at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.”

Properly speaking, we don’t amaze Jesus; God’s work in us amazes Jesus. What greater work does God do than to make dead souls alive—that is, to make unbelieving hearts believe? God Himself is amazed by this work of His. He is not *surprised* by it, but He finds it marvelous.

### **B. One of many ways Jesus amazes us**

There may be two ways we amaze Jesus, but countless are the ways Jesus amazes us. His willingness patiently to receive our unbelief is among the most amazing. How many divine works has Philip seen Jesus do? How many divine prophecies has Philip already seen Jesus fulfill? How could Philip after three years of very intimate friendship with Jesus not believe that Jesus was so closely united with the Father?

How could Jesus continue patiently loving, chastening, encouraging, challenging, and desiring Philip and the other disciples in His company? How can Jesus continue patiently loving, chastening, encouraging, challenging, and desiring you and me in His company? That is amazing... humbling... transforming... edifying... and compelling. With His everlasting love He loves us, and with His lovingkindness He draws us to Himself. <sup>Jer31.3</sup>

Marvelously Christ receives our unbelief and forgives us and enables and persuades us to believe in Him.

## III. Divine Requirement of Belief

Second, Christ requires that we believe. “The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. <sup>11</sup>Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.” Here is the fact and the command. Firstly the fact: Jesus does not operate independently from the Father. Though they are two Persons, the Father and the Son are of essential unity. One God.

It is bad enough that we are so slow to believe His Word of truth. Hello, This is God speaking. To not believe God’s Word is to reject all that is true and right and good. To not believe God’s Word is to believe all that is false and unjust and evil. There is no middle or shady ground between God’s Word and another word. Anything that does not absolutely agree with God’s Word is a falsehood.

It is bad enough that we are so slow to believe His Word of truth. But then we don’t even believe the evidence we see with our own eyes. Do you love the Bible? How do you think that happened, when you were born hating it? Do you hate the stirrings of sin in your heart? How do you think that happened when you were born in love with sin? Do you love believers in the Church? How do you think that happened when you used to scoff at them for being joyful, despise them for needing a cross, and reject them for embracing a revealed moral rule?

Now you believe in Jesus. You have engaged with the One who can fill your heart with happiness that you never asked or imagined. That is a marvelous work that God accomplishes through the Holy Spirit. Considering such heavenly happiness, what worldly goods do you have or in what worldly activities do you now engage, that you simply cannot think about not having or doing in heaven?

I recall as a wee lad being at my friend Rudi’s house. We were playing with Corgi cars—highly detailed die-cast metal cars with real spring suspensions, doors that opened, hoods that raised revealing the engine underneath. Rudi had a Ferrari Berlinetta 250 LeMans... Red. Once the Ferrari was test-driven around the floor and under the dressers in his bedroom by my hand, I was quickly convinced that I could never be happy in my own bedroom in my own father’s house so long as that red Ferrari was not there with me. Being of Very Slick Design, it slipped quite unnoticeable into the pocket of my lederhosen and out of Rudi’s house. No child ever had to learn how to commit the wicked sins of envy and theft.

Now, what are you convinced that you could not be happy without, in the room prepared for you in your Father’s house? Over what would you contend with Jesus if He told you that you needed to leave it in this world when you go to heaven? Do you believe that Jesus is now preparing a place for you in His Father’s house... and everything—*everything*—you need for pure and perfect happiness is already there awaiting your arrival?<sup>v2</sup>

Jesus requires belief. Believe his Word. Believe His amazing works around you and in you. Hello, This is God speaking and This is God working. Everything you could possibly want for all eternity is in Him and comes from Him. Believe His Word and His Works.

#### **IV. Glorious Result of Belief**

Third, belief has glorious results. <sup>12</sup>“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father. <sup>13</sup>Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.”

Now Jesus is looking into the future. God can do that, you know. You don’t need to see the future; you just need to know that God knows your future and if you believe in Him you believe He has made the future good for you.<sup>Ro8.28</sup> It comforts us to know that God covers the future. John Calvin in his inimitable way wrote, “When God has loaded us with every kind of blessings, if he pause for fourteen days, we fancy that he is no longer alive. This is the reason why Christ not only mentions his present power, which the Apostles, at that time, beheld with their eyes, but promises an uninterrupted conviction of it for the future.”

Greater works than Jesus did while He was on earth! How do you figure? Remember the room. In the room is Jesus, and in the room are eleven disciples. As far as we know, that is all who are in the room. Within a few short hours, there will be Jesus. He will be in *our* room on the cross, and the disciples will be scattered. Small church.

Even after Jesus’ resurrection, for about six weeks the small group was huddled together in prayer in the upper room, with Jesus making various appearances and speaking to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Then after He ascended into heaven, on the day of Pentecost Jesus sent forth the Holy Spirit as He had promised here in John.

Let the greater works begin! Church grows by 3,000 souls in one day! Disciples who once denied and fled stood up boldly for the name of Jesus in the face of deadly persecution. Not only One Messiah, but now a whole band of disciples was doing miracles. Not only One was speaking Truth, but a group of Apostles was recording revealed Truth in what we now hold dear as NT Scripture.

Let the greater works begin! But these are not a bunch of independent operating agencies using their new powers. This is the One and only Living and True God doing greater works... and using His disciples as His instruments.

Why? Why does Jesus command us to believe, and why does He do greater works through His disciples than He did on earth? Why? Because this shows the ongoing eternal power and glory of the Father in the Person and work of the Son through the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus presses this obligation upon His disciples, to ask for things in His name. To ask for things in His name is to ask things that He wants to do, which is to ask things that the Father wants to do, when He wants to do them, and how He wants to do them. How do you know what the Father wants to do? Since the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father, all you need to do is find out what the Son wants to do, for that is one and the same with what the Father wants to do.

So... how do you know what the Son wants to do? Well, that is more properly the matter of coming weeks in these chapters of John. It is enough now to know what the Son wants in you: believe in Him.

It is enough now to know that since there is eternal unity among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and since His people are united unbreakably to Christ in the Covenant of Grace, we are eternally removed from His wrath for our sins and eternally near to Him in lovingkindness. Herein is the resolution to our troubles.

If you are troubled because you are not united to Christ and are thus subject to the judgment of God for your sins, then receive Jesus' command to believe in His name. Inherent in that command is the offer and promise that if you receive His love, you will receive the Father's forgiveness for all your sins. You will receive all the blessings of Christ's perfect record of obedience, and of Christ's satisfying all the Law's demands to repay your sins with divine justice. Be cleansed by His blood and not only your feet but your conscience will be cleared of all filthy sin and all fearful expectation of recompense for sin.

If you are troubled because you are united to Christ yet He feels far from you, then receive Jesus' command to believe in His unity with the Father. Your trouble may last for a day or for a season. God is not dead, and Father is not divorced from Son or Spirit. This season is part of preparing a place for you in the Father's house. Your union with Christ cannot be broken—God has shed His blood for you. He won't be dishonored and you won't be disappointed. Stand fast in His love; be abandoned to His way. He is True, and since you have the Son you have life, eternal life.<sup>1jo5.12</sup>