

AHH LIFE!

REFLECTING ON JESUS' UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE

Water from Rock, October 31, 2017, Tim Smith

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

John 10:10

INTRODUCTION

In this series we reflect on Jesus' teaching about experiencing the life He came to give us. We will focus on what is customarily called "The Upper Room Discourse", or, Jesus' teaching in the Upper Room (and prayer afterwards) a few hours before He died. In John 13-17 Jesus describes how followers can now live in God's "eternal life", zoe aionios, ("life of the age to come").

We have looked at John 20:30-31 as providing the "key" unlocking John's Gospel and its structure:

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Chapters 1 – 12: *"so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God..."*

- Seven signs affirming Jesus' Messianic identity and deity: 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-9; 6:1-15; 6:16-21; ch.9; 11:1-44.
- Seven Messianic, "I AM" claims, by Jesus: 6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5.

Chapters 13 – 17: *"...that through believing you may have life in his name."*

- Jesus explains how through believing in Him believers might experience His life in them.

THE UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE CONTINUED: JOHN 14:8-14

1. Jesus' words come in response to Philip's urgent plea: *"Lord show us the Father and we will be satisfied."*
2. Jesus responds by pointing Philip back to the things he has seen Jesus do and heard Jesus' say; this is the Father at work as Jesus lives in Him. *"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*
3. Jesus' oneness with the Father:
 - *"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."*
 - *"Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"*
 - *"Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."*
4. The three mysteries of the Christian faith:
 - The mystery of the Trinity: the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God.
 - The mystery of the Incarnation: the divine nature of the Son is united to human nature in one person.
 - The mystery of the Atonement (At-one-ment): God unites fallen, frail human nature to Himself through Jesus Christ.

v. 10 *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; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.*

Jesus lived and ministered in reliance on the Father who was in Him and He was in the Father.

- John 5:19, *Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father [javascript:void\(0\);](#) does, the Son does likewise.*
- John 8:28 *I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me.*

v. 12 *Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.*

1. If “*greater works*” means “more miraculous” it would be difficult to think of works exceeding walking on water, stilling a raging storm, feeding multitudes, and raising the dead.
2. Jesus relates the “*greater works*” to His going to the Father that means the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after His ascension. The greater works refer to the extended work of the Spirit that occurs when Jesus ascends to the Father.
 - “*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*” (John 16:6)
3. "That which was done by St. Peter at Pentecost, by St. Paul all over the world, that which is effected by an ordinary preacher, a single believer, by bringing the Spirit into the heart, could not be done by Jesus during His sojourn in this world." (Frédéric Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, Vol. 3)
4. Jesus’ personal ministry in the flesh was local; He never traveled far or preached to that many people. Only with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit could Jesus’ work be universal.

vv. 13-14 ¹³*I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* ¹⁴*If in my name you ask me [javascript:void\(0\)](#); for anything, I will do it.*

1. “Christ’s name is the revelation of Christ’s character, and to do a thing in the name of another person is to do it as His representative, and as realising that in some deep and real sense-for the present purpose at all events-we are one with Him. And it is when we know ourselves to be united to Christ and one with Him, and representative in a true fashion of Himself, as well as when, in humble reliance on His work for us and His loving heart, we draw near, that our prayer has power, as the old divines used to say, ‘to move the Hand that moves the world,’ and to bring down a rush of blessing upon our heads. Prayer in the name of Christ is hard to offer. It needs much discipline and watchfulness; it excludes all self-will and selfishness. And if, as my text tells us, the end of the Son’s working is the glory of the Father, that same end, and not our own ease or comfort, must be the end and object of all prayer which is offered in His name.” (Alexander MacLaren, *John*)
2. “What a relief to every sincere soul who sees the un-spirituality and worldliness of his own heart and his lack of faith, love and solicitude,

- when it becomes clear to him that it is not necessary for us when we pray to work ourselves up to a state of spirituality which we feel that we lack. Nor do we need to put forth any effort to make what little faith we have seem as great as possible. And we do not need to fan the cold embers in our hearts in order to make our waning zeal flare up again...But hear me, not for my sake, nor for the sake of my prayer, and not even because of my distress, for it is a result of my own sinfulness. But hear me for Jesus' sake." (Ole Hallesby, *Prayer*)
3. The church's mission has been powered by the prayers of God's people guided by the Holy Spirit through the centuries "*doing greater works than these.*"

SUMMARY

Jesus explains in the Upper Room Discourse that the Father is in Him and He is in the Father, and they are in us, and we are in them.

- John 14:20 "*On that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.*"

The mutuality this implies is staggering:

- Romans 14:4-5 "*For as in one body we have many members...so we, being many are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another.*"

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* "The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-Personal life is to be played out in each of us; or (putting it the other way round) each of us has got to enter that pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made."