

## “Revealed” - John 14:18-24 <sup>1</sup>

**Fellowship question:** (Use *one* of these to break the ice, to begin some discussion, and to lead into the study):

What is one way that you realize that you are like one of your parents?

What is one way that you realize that your child is like you?

### Information

Let’s remember the context of John 14. Jesus is trying to comfort and assure his disciples. Within hours, Jesus will be taken from them, tried, beaten, killed by crucifixion, and buried. The section of John between the seven miraculous signs and Jesus's passion is chock full of reminders of who Jesus is, why Jesus came, and prayer for those who follow him. Jesus wants them to know that they have done the right thing by following him and to let them know that in a non-physical way, he will be with them forever.

For this lesson we will look at the third of three “misunderstanding Jesus” stories that we have in John 14.

In the first story, Jesus tells his disciples that he is going away, but he assures them that they know where he is going and they know the way to follow him. Thomas argues that they know no such thing. Jesus responds, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

In the second story, Jesus says, “If you know me, you know the Father. If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” Phillip responds, “Show us the Father and we will be satisfied.” Jesus, with a measure of frustration, says, “Hey, dummy. [Not in the original Greek.] Listen to my words. Look at my actions. These are the actions of God the Father if God were here in the flesh, walking with you.”

Now we come to the third story. This is the question from Judas. Not Judas Iscariot, John is careful to let us know. Another Judas. Another confused disciple.

- Have a class member read John 14:18-24.

Imagine that you have a new boss. Wow, you love this new boss! They have great leadership skills, they respect all the employees, and they have the best reputation of any boss you’ve ever worked under. Out of the blue one day, they announce they are leaving. How would you feel? What questions would you have?

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“Having warned his disciples that he is going away, leaving them behind in a perpetually challenging situation, Jesus makes his disciples yet another series of promises: he will not abandon them; he will come to them; they will see him; they will live.”<sup>2</sup>

Back to the boss story. Your boss says, “I’m going away, but I’ll be back. The best employees will see me here when I return. But others won’t see me.” What questions are raised now?

In verse 21, Jesus says, “I will reveal myself to those who love me.” Some translations use the word “manifest.” From those two words, we get revelation and manifestation. What do those words mean to you? What images or stories come to mind?

“To manifest means to show plainly. If [Jesus] showed himself plainly to his followers, how was it that the world would not see him? His answer was that he would show himself plainly to them in that he and the Father would come and make their home with them. He would dwell with them, not physically, as in the days of his incarnation, but spiritually, through the Spirit’s presence with them.”<sup>3</sup>

This is not unlike the sentiment expressed at a funeral, that the loved one is not dead because they live in our hearts and memories. They live on as we honor their good works and follow in their good ways. How is this true? How is it untrue? How is what Jesus is saying different from that sentiment?

We can only imagine how difficult it was for the disciples to follow Jesus, to absorb his teachings, to give Jesus an appropriate role, and to struggle to understand his parables. He lived in a way that was unfamiliar, especially for someone who had amazing powers and wisdom. Most of those people wanted all the attention they could get.

“This inquiry [of Judas] must not be lightly passed over. It expressed the extreme difficulty in the minds of the disciples about Jesus. They believed in His Messiahship, but the one thing which they could not understand was that he persisted in hiding this from the world. They would fain have hurried Him to a public manifestation and demonstration of His office, and of Himself; and could not comprehend the reason of this limitation of manifestation.”<sup>4</sup>

Jesus would be revealed for who he truly was. Because of this, he would be hated and killed. We Christians believe he was raised from the tomb and ascended to God the Father. If Jesus left, how would others see him? How would he “return”?

“The answer of the Lord is equally, and supremely of value, showing, as it does, that the limitation was not capricious<sup>5</sup>. He was perfectly ready to manifest Himself to all those who

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<sup>2</sup> Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 314.

<sup>3</sup> Ray Summers, *Behold the Lamb: An Exposition of the Theological Themes in the Gospel of John* (Nashville: Broadman, 1979), 186.

<sup>4</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to John*, The Analyzed Bible (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1909), 173.

<sup>5</sup> Adj. “given to sudden and unaccountable changes of mood or behavior; fickle, unstable”

fulfilled the conditions for receiving the manifestation. Those conditions are clearly set forth in the argument of His answer. The power of receptivity is created by obedience. The inspiration of obedience is love. The issue of obedience based upon love is manifestation.”<sup>6</sup>

Our obedience, based on love for Jesus, grows - usually slowly.

“The world had rejected Him, and consequently made impossible its understanding of Him. Full manifestation can only be made progressively. The first gleam of light demands submission and obedience. If that be yielded to, then capacity is created for further revelation. Light had come to [people] living in darkness. They had disobeyed the light, and so had destroyed their capacity to receive further revelation or manifestation. To those who had been obedient to the measure of light received, it was possible to make further revelation.”<sup>7</sup>

Once again, Jesus uses the image so commonly used in John’s Gospel - that of remaining or abiding. In verse 20, Jesus says, “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

“The mutual indwelling through love does not mean that we are absorbed into the divine in a Hindu sense, as the drop of rain is lost in the vast ocean. If this were so, all personal relationships would be lost, and love would be impossible. Nor does it mean that we are seized in a spiritual ecstasy, which takes possession of mind and will. But it means that we share the divine life, receive a divine energy which enables us to speak God’s words and do God’s works. It is a personal relationship with the living God mediated through a historical person, Jesus Christ, whose life is the outpouring of God’s love for the world and for each individual soul. We must first of all be willing to receive that love, and then, with that love, love both God and our fellow men. So we get caught up in the eternal activity of love which goes on within the being of God [Godself], is poured out on [people] in Christ, and returns to God in the love and obedience awakened in the hearts of [people] by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>8</sup>

Another image of this abiding presence of Jesus is that of a home (verse 23). We speak of being in God’s presence in our “heavenly home.” Yet, Jesus wants to be present in our “temporal home” as well.

“The permanent dwelling places [v 23] are not to be found only when the disciples have died, or when the end of the historical order has come; they are provided even in the time of the earthly pilgrimage, and they endure beyond the bounds of physical death. For, as Paul put it, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. He is the ‘place’ where we meet God, to be ‘in him’ now is to be in him for ever.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Morgan, 174.

<sup>7</sup> Morgan, 174.

<sup>8</sup> George Appleton, *John’s Witness to Jesus* (World Christian Books, No. 8. London: United Society for Christian Literature. 1955), 80f.

<sup>9</sup> John Marsh, *The Gospel of Saint John*, The Pelican New Testament Commentaries (London: Penguin, 1968), 510.

Everyone does not want to be with Jesus. Not in eternity, not now. As John said in the prologue, “He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. (1:10-11).”

“Jesus’ response here is that if anyone in Israel seeks to seek him, all that person must do is show love for Jesus by keeping his word... Then the Father and Jesus will ‘make our home’ with them (v23)... The problem is that ‘the world’ does not love Jesus because it does not keep his word and therefore does not hear the Father who sent Jesus.”<sup>10</sup>

“One cannot love God and break his word at the same time.”<sup>11</sup> (See 1 John 5:2-3)

“The word for *make our home with him* reflects the same Greek root as was found in vv 1-3 at the beginning of the chapter. The eternal dwelling of God with [people] begins now. Jesus continues that the [person] who does not love him will not keep his word; so, we may deduce, the Father cannot enter into the same relationship with him as with the loving and obedient disciple... It would not be possible for the Father to dwell in hearts and lives that did not honour the Son. To win an allegiance by some mighty theophany might produce a sullen intellectual ascent to the being and power of God: but it would not bring [people] into a fellowship of love and mutual service.”<sup>12</sup>

“Jesus could have written His name in the stars if He had wanted. Instead He chose to show Himself to the world through the love and obedience of His followers. That would be the most convincing proof He could offer. People who ask for signs never believe them when they come, but who can deny the convicting power of a changed life? Jesus would write His name across their lives and the lives of all who would come to follow Him.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Transformational Exercise**

The last verse and the chorus of the hymn, Let Others See Jesus in You, says,

Then live for Christ both day and night,  
Be faithful, be brave, and true,  
And lead the lost to life and light;  
Let others see Jesus in you.

Chorus:

Let others see Jesus in you,  
Let others see Jesus in you;  
Keep telling the story, be faithful and true,

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<sup>10</sup> Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 232.

<sup>11</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: A Concise Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1988), 77.

<sup>12</sup> Marsh, 510, 511.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Card, *The Parable of Joy: Reflections on the Wisdom of the Book of John* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 183.

Let others see Jesus in you.<sup>14</sup>

In silence, ponder, who is someone you have seen Jesus live through? How were they “faithful, brave, and true”?

After a time of silence, say a silent prayer. Thank God for this person’s witness.

Then, if you are comfortable doing so, I’d like to ask you to share that person’s testimony with us. Do you have a brief story that illustrates how Jesus lived through this person?

Close in a prayer something like this: *You are our holy home. We live in you. You live in and through us. We thank you for the memories we have of persons who have influenced this world for your kingdom. Be with us as we strive to let others see Jesus through us. Amen.*

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<sup>14</sup> [https://hymnary.org/text/while\\_passing\\_through\\_this\\_world\\_of\\_sin](https://hymnary.org/text/while_passing_through_this_world_of_sin) accessed November 14, 2024.