

The Names of Jesus: Way

Text: John 14:1-7

Warming Up

Questions:

1. *What is one of the biggest encouragements you draw from your faith?*
2. *What is one of the biggest concerns you have about your faith?*

Digging In

Read **John 14:1-3**.

In the King James Version of the Bible, the word for room—*monay*—is translated as “mansion”. This choice of word led to the idea that Jesus is going away into “heaven” to build us a mansion to live in for all eternity. But *monay* simply means “room”. In fact, the language of building a “room” onto the father’s house is *wedding* language. This is what the groom-to-be did. Some have argued this is less about *where* our relationship with God will be and more about what *the nature* of our relationship with God will be.

Questions:

1. *Why do you think the interpreters of the King James Version chose to translate a word meaning “room” as “mansion”?*
2. *How does John 14 read differently if Jesus is preparing for us a “room” rather than a “mansion”?*
3. *Why do you think Jesus is choosing to use wedding language here to comfort his disciples about his imminent departure?*

This passage has also been used in some circles to speak of heaven as somewhere else quite separate from the earth we inhabit now. But the language of Scripture over and over speaks of something else entirely.

Pay attention to the language used of heaven in the last chapters of the Bible: Read **Revelation 21:1-5**.

The Greek word for something that is *brand new*—that is *quantitatively* new—is the word *naos*. But that is not the word used in Revelation 21. The word here is *kainos*, which mean *renewed*, or *qualitatively* new.

Questions:

1. *How does reading Revelation 21:1 as **renewed** rather than **brand new** change your understanding of God’s relationship with the earth?*
2. *How might that change our understanding of our relationship with the earth?*
3. *When we are told the first heaven and first earth “pass away”, what does verse 4 tell us that means, precisely?*
4. *What do you think it means that Revelation 21 pictures God and His city coming “down” to us rather than us going “up” to God?*
5. *How might God coming “down” to us change our understanding of heaven?*

Read **John 14:5-7**.

Sometimes “no one comes to the Father except through me” is used as a stern warning. But in the context of John 14:1 Jesus says he is speaking these words to *comfort*. In fact, Jesus is sharing these words after telling Peter he will deny Jesus three times. Perhaps what Jesus is sharing is something that is already true, that we simply need to trust is true. What if Jesus is saying, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. It is still only the way of my grace that will bring you home, Peter.”

Question: *Have you heard “no one comes to the Father except through me” as a comfort to the faithless or as a stern warning to the faithless? In what ways?*

Sending Out

The Hebrew Scriptures, or Old Testament, often speak of our relationship with God as a road or path that we walk with God. Our relationship with God is spoken of as a journey in a particular direction. While Jesus invites us onto this road only by the “way” of grace, Jesus is also using this “way” language to talk about this journey and direction with him.

Questions:

1. *How does thinking about your relationship with God as beginning with and being sustained by grace shape your understanding of faith?*
2. *How does thinking about your relationship with God as a journey shape your understanding of faith?*
3. *What particular “way of Jesus” do you find to be the most challenging?*

Closing

In this passage Jesus reminds us over and over again that this difficult and challenging “way” is a journey we never walk alone. God is choosing to be wedded to us, present to us, walking this journey and path *with* us. In that place of comfort...

...take a moment in silence to come before God and ask the question, “*What word or phrase or idea or moment does God want me to remember from this morning and carry with me this week?*”

Close with prayer.