

## Sermon- Show us the Father

Scripture: John 14:7-11

Sunday, July 21, 2019

In our journey through the Gospel of John we have been over the last few sermons been sitting with Jesus and listening in with wide eyes at the conversations between Jesus and individual disciples. We started with His exchange with Judas. Then we looked at Peter's faith declarations. Then last Sunday looked at Thomas' asking Jesus to show the way. In response we get Jesus' super I AM saying, "I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father but by me". Today, we get to sit in on an exchange with another disciple, Philip. Now Philip is the one who introduced Nathaniel to Jesus. Great thing to have on your resume right? The names of the people you introduced to Jesus! 😊 At the feeding of the 5000, Jesus turns to Philip to ask him to feed the crowd and he is the one that does the quick calculation to estimate the cost of doing that. Then later on when the Greeks want to meet Jesus, they come to Philip. Maybe because Philip had a Greek name. It is possible that he spoke Greek because church tradition records that Apostle Philip later on preached the Gospel in Greece, Turkey and Syria. Now when you look at what we see in the Gospels about Philip, he comes across as a practical person. As Jesus declares, "if you had known me, you would know who my Father is" and then "from now on you know him and have seen him", for Philip that statement seems too abstract. He can't get his mind around what Jesus just said so he tells Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father". We can sit in our comfortable pews with our comfortable lives two thousand years later and think how slow Philip is in understanding. But if we did that we fail to understand where Philip is coming from. Also, his question enables Jesus to elaborate and explain what he means by "if you have seen me you have seen the Father". That is what we are going to look at today.

The first thing we need to understand is that for Philip to even ask Jesus this question, "Lord, show us the Father" is a shocking departure for humankind in the history of the

world. Let me explain. If you look at the entire Old Testament, the human desire for some reason is to want to run away from God. In the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were tempted by the lie that they could become like God and thereby bypass God, they went for it. When the people of Israel were in the wilderness and standing at the foot of Mt Sinai and God appeared to them at the top of Mt Sinai in a spectacular fashion, they told Moses you deal with God and we will deal with you but we can't handle God directly. So, Moses was the one exception who could go really close to God. In fact he wanted to see God and he wanted to see God so badly that he asked God if he could. And God told him in Ex 33:20 *"You cannot see My face, for no one can see Me and live"*. The Israelites with very few exceptions never asked to see God for this reason. They knew that if they simply looked at God directly, that would be the end of them. When Israel was made a nation, God had made them a very different kind of nation because it was ruled directly by God. And the way that worked was that God instructed whoever He had put in charge, which was Joshua when they just got to the promised land or later on it was the priest Samuel. Now if they were attacked God promised to help protect them. That is what He did during the 40 years in the desert and 6 years it took to conquer the promised land. But no, the people did not want that kind of heavy dependence on God. They wanted their own king who would fight their battles for them, not God! In other words, whenever possible God's people were looking for ways to distance themselves from God! And God always complied with their desire for distance. Till it got to a point where after the last prophet in the Old testament had spoken, God was silent for more than 400 years before John the Baptist was raised to prepare the way for the fullest revelation of God in history. So listen up folks. It is easy to sit in our armchairs in our comfortable homes and look at Philip's request to show us the Father in verse 8 as a dumb move after Jesus had just declared that "you have seen the father if you saw me" in verse 7. But what we need to appreciate is that like Peter and Thomas before him, these people were wrestling with some very big things like how

can God be standing in their presence in human form? This is something people don't even fully understand today! But Philip's willingness to wrestle with Jesus and obey him with his life is an example worth studying for you and me.

So what was Philip wrestling with exactly? Well, he was wrestling with what Jesus means when he says, "if you know Jesus, you know the Father". Well, Jesus elaborates this way, in verse 10. He says, "the Father is in me and I am in the Father". He then goes on to say, "*The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.* <sup>11</sup> *Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do*". Jesus is explaining something that the church later broke their heads over and with the power of the Holy Spirit figured out that what Jesus was talking about was the inner workings of the Trinity. And whenever we have the opportunity, we should try and meditate on the Trinity. Because only then can we understand the deepest meaning of the kind of community we are called to create. So what Jesus is saying is that, the Father is in Him and He is in the Father. The first thing to note about this is that Jesus is a person and the heavenly Father is a distinct person. This part is easy because our life is full of distinct people so we get this.

But when we go deeper, the question is, what is a person made up off? Now this is a bit of a discussion of philosophy. So just hang with me. Specifically, I want us to understand personhood. What makes a person a person? The first component of a person is their name, right? And the name implies their identity. This is what makes them unique. If you have more time you might get to find out about the person's values. You might even have time to find out about their relationships. All these things help you draw a better picture ultimately about what makes this person unique and what their instincts or tendencies are like. Every individual is unique, from our fingerprints to our style of walking and our voice. There are literally thousands of unique identifiers that make you

different from every other human being that ever lived. This uniqueness is what defines our personhood. This is our identity.

Now in the same conversation, you might ask a person what they do. This helps us figure out what this person's motivations and desires and purpose is. There is a word for it. This is our "will". Two things that make up a person, their identity and will.

And what Jesus is saying is something quite fascinating. He is saying that while he is his own person distinct from his heavenly Father, and someone who has his own will, yet, what is special about him is that he does not actually do his own will. Instead he sets aside his own will and does his Father's will instead. In other words, Jesus sets aside all his own motivations, desires and ambitions, to accomplish his Father's motivations, desires and ambitions.

This is quite a radical thought and difficult for any human being anywhere in the world to do. But if there is any country where setting aside your own will to do someone else's will is the most difficult, it is this country. Because in this country we give the highest value to people who are self-made individuals who have the strongest wills. We admire great accomplishments, the people who climb the tallest mountains, invent flying machines and even walk on the moon. All amazing accomplishments of strong willed people. If we have people who do other people's will in this world, it is because a stronger willed person has managed to overpower the weaker willed person so that the weaker willed person has no choice but to do the will of the stronger person. But what we see in the case of Jesus is very different from anything ever observed in the universe. You see, between Jesus and the Father both are God, both have equal value and both have equally strong wills. Yet is not the nature of God to simply throw his weight around. Now, Jesus who has an equally strong will as the Father, voluntarily bends his will to the Father's will and accomplishes what the Father wants to accomplish. And you might be asking, so why does Jesus do this? Why does Jesus not show his own

individuality? Why does he do everything according to His Father's will? Well, the main reason is that when we look at Jesus' Words and Actions, we now get to see the Father's will. Remember the Father's will is his motivations, passions and ambitions. And when you know someone's motivations, passions and ambitions, you can say you know them, can't you? That is what Jesus wants to do. To enable people to know His heavenly Father. To know God!

Just one more thing I want to say about this Father-Son relationship. And that is there is a kind of symmetry here. i.e. in verse 10 Jesus also says, I AM in the Father and the Father is in me. In other words, just as Jesus has his own individual identity but the will of both himself and his Father, so also the Father has his own individual identity and the will of both himself and the Son. So while the Son does the will of the Father, you can be sure that because the Son is "in the Father", the Father **knows** and **loves** and **honors** the will of the Son as well.

Now, why is it so important to understand how Jesus the Son relates to his heavenly Father? Well, for one, Jesus spends a lot of time talking about it and so it must be important 😊 Of course this relationship is important because it helps us to understand what our relationship with Christ should look like. Specifically when Apostle Paul says that we are "in Christ" what does that mean? Well it means that even though we have our own unique identity and our unique will, we need to put our own will aside and do the will of Christ in our lives. Because that way people can know Christ's will. And that why they too can know Christ. That is our main job in life. To know the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and be a Christ disciple all our lives. There is no better way to explain this than to tell you a story of someone who followed this. There is an amazing missionary by the name of Eric Lidell. Now Eric was a missionary kid born in China to Scottish missionary parents. But he went to school in Scotland and even went to college to study pure Science at the University of Edinburgh. But Eric was also a gifted athlete. In fact he was both a runner and a rugby player. And when I mean gifted athlete I mean he was

Olympic level gifted. He represented Scotland in the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris. His event was the 100 m race. But it so happened that in that year they scheduled the 100m race on Sunday. That was his Sabbath day and so he refused to run the 100m. Instead he decided to run the 400m race which was not his specialty because it was held on a weekday. Guess what happened! Not only did he win the Gold medal in the 400m which was not his event, he made a record which was not broken for 12 years after that! And we are still talking about it today. By the way if you want to know more about Eric Lidell go see the movie Chariots of Fire that was made about him. And in spite of achieving something so amazing in sports he felt God's will for him was to be a missionary to China. And so he followed God's will and went to China the very next year and served there until he died in 1945 at the young age of 43. But because Eric Lidell did his Father's will so many people were able to see our heavenly Father.

If you and I can live our lives in such a way that people are drawn to us and ask us the question, "show us the Father", you know your life is on the right track. And you don't have to be an Olympic athlete or an astronaut to do the Father's will. God made each one of us unique.

Take these words from Apostle Paul in Eph 2:10 *10 For **you\*** are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as **your\*** way of life.* And the greatest good that you can do is to set aside your will to do the Father's will so that people will know the Father through you. Let us pray.