

Session 3

March 20, 2022

A LIFE OF TRUST

John 13:36–14:6

The Bible says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding” (Prov. 3:5). But that’s much easier said than done, especially in particularly unsettling circumstances.

By this point in John 13, the disciples were clearly rattled. What should have been a warm and moving Passover celebration had become a surprising, stressful, and somewhat depressing farewell for Jesus. This was punctuated by Jesus’ statement that He was going away (v. 33). To His disciples, what was a dark night already (v. 30), suddenly seemed much darker. As they panicked, Jesus reassured them.

Honorable intentions (13:36-38). Once again, Peter simply can’t help it, and makes himself the center of attention. The question (v. 36) is logical. Jesus had already announced His departure to the Jews and was again reminding His disciples that His time with them was short. Peter’s passion was no doubt driven by legitimate love for his Lord and his own zeal to stick by Him, no matter what. But the weightier spiritual principles Jesus had been expounding for them were clearly lost on the disciple. The “cannot” of Jesus’ reply disallowing Peter to follow (v. 36) connotes some weakness, inability, or lack of preparation on Peter’s part. To alleviate the sting of His statement, Jesus reminded him that he would indeed follow Him later. Jesus was most likely referring to His suffering and death but could have been looking even beyond that to eternity in heaven. Regardless, Peter would not leave it alone. Besides being combative, his rant in verse 37 is both defensive and arrogant, highlighting his ignorance of the gravity of events this night held for the Lord. For reflection: *How did Peter’s outbursts demonstrate his faith in the Lord? How did they demonstrate his lack of faith?*

A place prepared (14:1-3). In response to the distress the disciples were now experiencing, Jesus mixed words of encouragement with explanation. The word for *trouble* in verse 1 indicates *unrest, disturbance, and even agitation*. Although their circumstances were rapidly changing, the faithfulness of their God remained steadfast (v. 1). Notice the encouraging promises Jesus made. First, there is *personal preparation* (v. 2). The Father’s house is clearly heaven, where God dwells (see Is. 66:1). Jesus promised to prepare a place for them in glory. Second, there is His *physical return* (v. 3). Not only would He guarantee His Helper while they tarried on earth (see John 14:15-17), but He promised to return for them personally, and *receive them* to Himself. Third, there is the promise of His *permanent presence* (v. 3). Together, they would dwell for eternity in their heavenly home. For reflection: *We can clearly see the encouragement Jesus gave His disciples. But what important theological truths does Jesus reveal in these verses?*

Exclusive access (14:4-6). Time and again, the Lord had explained what was about to happen to Him (see Matt. 16:21 et al.). Verse 4 confirms that they had all the intellectual information they needed to survive the coming trial. Yet Thomas voiced again what most of them were still no doubt thinking. Simply put, they still didn’t get it. If they didn’t understand *where* He was going, how could they possibly understand *how* to get there? As frustrating as that question must have been to Jesus, it was most providential for us. For in the Lord’s response (v. 6), we learn a series

of powerful truths, all of which point to the exclusivity of Christ Jesus as the sole means of salvation. Christ represents the only *way* to salvation; the only source of real, divine *truth*; the only source of real *life*, and the only means of reconciliation and access to the Father. For reflection: *Others may chafe at our unwavering conviction that salvation is only available through faith in Christ alone. What would be your explanation to those who want to offer another means of salvation?*