

## Sermon John 14:5-14

### Intro

Discussion questions for congregation:

In this section we look at the questions of Thomas and Philip. Before we look at those questions we shall imagine an extra disciple called Bob and invent a question for him.

(a) What question could Bob ask?

(b) How would you classify his question? Fear, lack of faith, lack of understanding etc?

Now look at the questions of Thomas and Philip. What do you think was the problem of each of them as expressed in the questions? How do you classify their questions?

### 1) The Question of Thomas v5-7

Quote, p215 of 'John the Gospel of Belief' by Merrill C Tenney re Way, Truth and Life.

Here, as elsewhere, Jesus did not upbraid Thomas for his unbelief, but held out to him a positive declaration on which he could base his thinking. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (14:6).

This affirmation of Jesus is one of the greatest philosophical utterances of all time. He did not say that He knew the way, the truth, and the life, nor that He taught them. He did not make Himself the exponent of a new system; He declared Himself to be the final key to all mysteries.

He was the *way*. Between the present of man's failure, and the future of God's design for him is a gulf which seems unbridgeable. Thomas recognized it, and so despaired. Jesus said, "I am the way," for in Him man is brought back to God, and through the Living Way he achieves his true destiny.

He was the *truth*. Truth is the scarcest commodity in the world. All the philosophers had sought for it; none had attained it. No one mind was great enough to grasp it; no one personality was pure enough to achieve it by conduct. Truth is neither an abstract system of integrated propositions, nor is it an impersonal ethic contained in many rules. It is both the reality and the ethic expressed in a person who is more flexible than legal rigidity and incomprehensible abstraction, and who is, notwithstanding, unchanging and consistent. Christ spoke with final authority in words adapted to human understanding.

He was the *life*. The way was a means of reaching the Father; the truth defined the righteous standards of the way; the life bespoke the dynamic which could make attainment possible. All through the Gospel of John *life* describes the principle of spiritual vitality that originates with God and that lifts men out of sin to Himself. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (1 :4). Christianity is not a system of philosophy, nor a ritual, nor a code of laws; it is the impartation of a divine vitality. Without the way there is no going, without the truth there is no knowing, without the life there is no living. Many others beside Christ have offered systems of thought that purported to bridge the gap between man and God; none other has by His own person succeeded in bridging it. "No one," He said, "cometh unto the Father, but by me."

It seems they knew Jesus personally. But regarding the spiritual their understanding was very limited. Not until after resurrection did they see more fully.

Knowledge of God must include an understanding of his "redemptive procedure in dealing with man." as well as the more obvious demonstration of his power in the creation we see around us. Know the Bible! There is no substitute!

He said to Thomas, "You know the way!"

Thomas had:

- previous teaching
- the leading of the Spirit

It is obedience and trust, not lack of information that is the problem.

### 2) The Question of Philip v8-11

He seems to be able to grasp calculations, see John 6:5-7

*When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming towards him, he said to Philip, Where shall we buy*

*bread for these people to eat? He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!*

Philip seemed to have trouble dealing with concepts of faith, the spiritual realm. He could not move from the natural to the spiritual. See John 6:34ff was it Philip? See the incident of the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:10ff.

To be baffled is not the same as being indifferent. Asking God questions is not wrong. Philip's question shows he was seeking.

Philip is more than curious, he is seeking. Our response will be different when discerning who is seeking and who is merely curious. See Matthew 7:6

*Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.*

I think Philip was asking that God be brought down to his level. This is dangerous, this is the way to the creation of idols. See Exodus 20:4

*You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.*

Idols do not represent God, only God incarnated in the Son does that. The reply to Philip was that God would not be brought down to his level any further. Now, by faith, he must rise up to God.

### **3) Our Questions**

Now leave the questions of Thomas and Philip behind and ask where you stand. Not your question, but what it indicates. Do you need to deal with fear, lack of faith, lack of understanding etc? More trust? More obedience?

What will you do about it?