

Day 1 - The Promise of a Home

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” John 14:1-3 ESV

During the Christmas season, the busyness of all the holiday celebrations can sometimes distract us from the profound joy we have in Christ. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, but do we fully grasp the implications of this reality? This holiday season, remember that God took on flesh and humbled himself to be born as a human. He died for everyone, and He overcame death by rising from the dead. That should not only be mind-blowing but encouraging. As we see in this passage, Jesus Christ came, and then He left to prepare a place for us in Heaven. Remember that the greatest thing we could experience is to be with Him in eternity. In a world that is clearly broken, it can often be difficult to see any hope in our world. These verses point us to the hope we can have in Christ. Therefore, allow these verses to guide you into a time of worship and prayer.

Prayer: Reflect on this hope that we can have a place secured for us in Heaven. Take this time to worship God, because He is so worthy of your praise. Pray for those who do not know of this hope that we can have in Christ. Specifically, pray for those that we will be serving through the Christmas Gift Shop ministry that they may realize and rest in this hope of an eternal home with God through Jesus.



Day 2 - The Way, the Truth, and the Life

“And you know the way to where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:4-6 ESV

It is quite striking to hear that the way to the Father is through someone and not through something we can do or a place that we can go. The shocking reality of this statement that Jesus makes in this passage can be easily lost on us who are very familiar with this passage. Not only was it inflammatory to most of the religious leaders of His time, but it also showed us the beauty of God's grace. The compassion and love shown in this passage are incredible; the most obvious way Jesus displays this is in the way in which He reveals to His disciples (and us) the way to the Father. We can only be saved through Jesus Christ Himself. Furthermore, it shows the attitude of Christ to love us so greatly to show us that He would humble himself to the point of taking on human flesh, enduring the brokenness of the world, and taking the punishment of sin for all who believe in Him. It is truly by trusting in God's mercy and grace through His sacrifice that we can go to our eternal home. It is only through following Jesus we get to enjoy eternity at home with Him. May this reality lead us to prayer.

Prayer: Thank God for what He has done for you and for all of us. Ask God to continue to pour His grace out to us. Also, pray specifically for the people who are going to receive help through the Christmas Gift Shop. May they see a display of God's mercy and grace and be responsive to the gospel.



Day 3 - Knowing the Father

“If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” John 14:7-9 ESV

The statements that Jesus makes in these verses cannot and should not be missed. These verses distinctly tell us about Jesus' divinity. This message is incredible because it begins to display the sacrifice that our God made to restore us so that we might enjoy knowing Him. Knowing the God of the Bible is truly the most wonderful thing we could imagine. That this perfect God created a path for rebellious and corrupt people to be forgiven and made right with Him is humbling. That He accomplished this reconciliation by becoming a man, dying on the cross, and rising from the dead is beyond our comprehension. The Father has allowed us access to Himself through The Messiah! Furthermore, through this passage and the rest of God's Word we get a glimpse into this person of the trinity—Jesus. Through Him, we can receive the awesome gift of having a personal relationship with God. The Christmas Gift Shop creates a unique opportunity to share our relationship to God with others.

Prayer: Pray that we would be ever vigilant in growing in our knowledge of God and in sharing the gospel He gave us. It is so wonderful to know our Heavenly Father and to be known by Him, but ask that He would give us hearts like His to desire for all to come home to Him. Pray that those who hear and see the gospel through the Christmas Gift Shop would clearly understand the Father's love and desire to know Him.

Day 4 - Greater Works

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

John 14:10-12 ESV

In these verses, Jesus is clear about why we would do the works that He has called us to. His statement here is a call for believers to follow in the very character of God. Many of us who have grown up in the church have heard the words, “Faith without works is dead,” found in James 2:26. We see that John elaborates on this idea of works as something that is done to reflect God. Through obedience to His will and way, we will be molded into His likeness and in turn reflect Christ. We must allow the Holy Spirit to work through us to point people to the Father. Obedience is not what saves us. It is through trusting in Christ's work at the cross that it is even possible to do the great works He calls us to. When we understand this truth and obey out of love and gratefulness to the Father, we will be able to do even greater works through Christ strengthening us. May this become a reality in our work with the Christmas Gift Shop.

Prayer: Pray that we will depend completely on Christ to accomplish the works that we have before us through the Christmas Gift Shop ministry. Ask God that He would remind us of this help we receive from Christ, especially when we get tired or when difficulties arise. Ask God to help us desire to do the work before us so we might become more like Him.



Day 5 - The Gift of the Holy Spirit

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. John 14:15-17 ESV

The work we undertake out of love for our Lord can sometimes be challenging. At times, it brings great joy. Regardless of the situation, achieving perfection in our work is not possible, which is why it is so kind of God to send us the Holy Spirit. Some people might experience confusion about the work and function of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for Holy Spirit that is used in this text is translated as Helper, Comforter, Advocate, or Counselor. In looking at the word Helper, one thing is clear: the Holy Spirit is given to assist us. However, the Bible teaches that only those who know, love, and trust Jesus as their Savior and Lord will experience and receive the Holy Spirit's help. How amazing it is that we receive this wonderful gift as children of God! It is very fitting for us to share this everlasting gift through giving Christmas gifts to those in need. In all that we do, may we recognize that ministry is not a work that is done because of us, but often despite us so that God may be the one who receives the glory He so rightly deserves.

Prayer: Pray for the volunteers and SBA staff who will be ministering through the Christmas Gift Shop. Ask God that the Spirit we have received would overflow in abundance and be clear to all who walk through the doors of the gift shop. Pray that this work would reflect our love of Christ. Furthermore, ask that the work done would grow our love for Christ even deeper and lead others to salvation.

Day 6 - Assurance in Christ's Promise

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me." John 14:18-24 ESV

God's promise in these verses is both encouraging and comforting. Because Christ reigned over death, we also can live. Although the apostles thought this knowledge was revealed only to them, we know that Jesus clearly states that it is open to all who love Him and demonstrate that love through obedience. We are brought home to God through the love of Jesus, and we can rest in our adoption as children of God because of what Christ did for us on the cross. Let us show our gratitude and love through joyful obedience! This passage reassures us of the salvation we can possess which provides us with profound hope and peace.

Prayer: Rejoice in the assurance Christ so graciously gives us in this passage. Pray that more people will come to have this great assurance through the ministry that is being provided through the Christmas Gift Shop and that they may experience the joy, peace, and hope found only in Christ.



Day 7 - Peace Found Through Hope

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here." John 14:27-31 ESV

Thankfully, our hope is found in the most consistent place – with Jesus Christ. This hope is one that we can be confident in. There is a peace that we can only have with God when we trust in Christ. This gift of peace dwells in us due to what He has done for us on the cross – that He made a way for us to be forgiven and adopted into the family of God. What an overwhelmingly gracious gift that is! As we give gifts because of the kindness and generosity of so many, let us not forget to share this greatest gift given: the gift of peace with God that is brought through trusting in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for salvation. By God's grace, He sent his Son so that through trusting in Him and repentance from our own will and way, we can rest in the promise of home with our Heavenly Father.

Prayer: Pray for the salvation of our Christmas Gift Shop guests and their families. Pray that God would give us all opportunities to share the gift of hope and peace that can only be found in Christ, and that the gospel would be on full display in word and deed this holiday season through the Christmas Gift Shop.

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Our Way Home John 14



Christmas Gift Shop

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