

John 14:1-14

Show us the Father

When my children were born people just said, "Oh that is a Yanishewski!" Well, it turns out that Yanishewski's have a distinctive nose and slender faces. My face was not slender and my nose a very different shape. There was no denying that the children were my husband, Ken's. To know our children's lineage was to know Ken. Now of course they all have very different personalities. They have a little of both of us in them, but they are also created as an individual and both nature and nurture have contributed to who they have become.

As a child myself, I often catch myself thinking, "Oh that was my mother coming out!" or with Ken I will say to him, "That is your father!", rarely meant in the most endearing way.

Today we heard Jesus making bold claims about his Father, God the Father. When Philip said, "Master, show us the Father, then we'll be content." Jesus responds with "To see me is to see the Father... Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you aren't mere words. I don't just make them up on my own. The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act. Believe me: I am in the Father and my Father is in me."

This goes a lot further than looking or acting alike. This is about an indwelling of the Father and the Son. If you want to know God, look at Jesus. Listen to his words. Follow his actions. The point of Jesus' life was to reveal God to us; to make God fully known.

As mysterious and distant as God may seem at times, God's character is revealed in the life of Jesus. You want to know what God thinks about those who are lonely, grieving, or on the margins? Look at how Jesus sought out, went to, or paid attention to those people. A woman looking for healing from years of bleeding, a man grieving the death of his daughter, a woman wanting healing for her daughter, a woman at the well, another accused of adultery. Jesus spent time with those who were struggling. This reveals God to us.

Stories told by Jesus of a lost sheep, a lost coin, a prodigal son, all reveal the importance of each person to God. Thousands fed by Jesus when they might have gone hungry reveals the provision of God. If you want to know God, look to Jesus.

Not only that, if you want to know the depth of God's love for you, look to the death of Jesus. Minister and teacher, David Lose writes, "Jesus goes to the cross for one reason and one reason only: to show us God, to show us God's grace and mercy, to show just

how much God loves us and how far God will go to communicate that love to us that we might believe and, believing, have life in his name.”¹

As we come together to worship at this time after Easter, it seems odd that we might go back to the days just ahead of the crucifixion to when Jesus has had dinner with his disciples and Judas has walked out and will betray Jesus the next day. But the words Jesus shares, as we hear it in this scripture, he does so knowing what he is about to face and the struggle, grief, and challenge that the disciples will endure. He does it all because of love, God’s love.

Jesus is aware that the story of reconciliation with God, healing, wholeness and transformation for people and the world can only continue if he leaves. Jesus entrusts the rest of the story “the greater things” to the disciples then, and now us. The Holy Spirit is sent to be with us. We are not left as orphans (John 14:18). The Holy Spirit, the Advocate, will remind us of all the things that Jesus told and taught the disciples leaving us well and whole. (John 14:25-26) The Holy Spirit continues to teach us about God, as revealed through Jesus in the scriptures.

I would like to touch on a few of the more well-known verses of this scripture that might be able to use a little unpacking. You may have heard this scripture only at funerals. It is comforting to think that Jesus has prepared a room for each of us in heaven, but this scripture speaks more correctly to Jesus preparing abiding places. Abiding in and with Jesus can happen now as well as in some future time of our dying.

Jesus and God the Father abide in one another. We are given that gift of as well. We can abide in God through Jesus. In difficult times, in peaceful times, in uncertain times, an abiding place is ready and prepared for us. This is deeply meaningful when one recognizes that Jesus suffered heartache, abandonment, denial from a friend, betrayal and ultimately death. Jesus, and thus God, knows suffering. There is an abiding place with God for us in our living and in our dying. God is with us.

When Jesus says, “Trust me” (v1) or in another translation, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” (NRSV) He says that as he knows what he is about to face. This statement recognizes that things are going to be really hard to endure. Jesus may have been trembling himself as he said it, with a tear rolling down his cheek, but he too trusted that God would not abandon him and so to see Jesus is to see God, to know Jesus is to know God, and is to know that we will never be abandoned. We may still have to face the struggle, the pain, the terrible losses in our lives, but we can trust Jesus.

There is another verse in this scripture that has been used for harm. Jesus said, “I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me.” (v 6) The following may be more familiar to you. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (NRSV). This language is for Christians. It

¹ Lose, David. [The Hardest Question - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary](#). Accessed May 4, 2023.

is insider language. For Christians the way to God is through Jesus. It is how we know God. Jesus is the way to knowing God, the Truth about God, and the Life given to and revealed for us. We are offered abundant, whole, and transformed lives.

This statement is not a comment on how God reveals God's self to others who are not Christian. We should not presume to know God's mind. As is written in Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, say the Lord." (NRSV) This does not mean that we cannot share our faith and understanding of God with others. It might be just the word of hope that someone needs to hear.

The other verse that has often been misused and misunderstood is that about asking for something in prayer and Jesus will do it. The New Revised Standard translation of the Bible says, "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it." (John 14:13,14).

Some have taken this to mean that if you ask for Mercedes, then Jesus will grant it. Or if you asked for God to take away the cancer, the disability, or the empty bank account, Jesus will do it. Life's realities can be difficult and of course we can ask for God to help us with things, but I think that how we heard the scripture earlier can be helpful. In *The Message*, by Eugene Peterson we hear, "From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it. Whatever you request in this way, I'll do."

And that takes us back to where we started. If you want to know God the Father, then look at Jesus. If you want to know how to pray, look to Jesus. There is no mystery there. Jesus loved, fed, and spent time with those who had need. He was with those who had questions and those who were outcast, those who were grieving, and even those who turned their backs on him. Jesus showed up. God's shows up in our lives.

Pray and trust that your prayers are heard and answered. Live in the abiding place of peace through Christ even when it seems that there should be no peace in your heart, mind, and/or body. Christ is risen. The one we worship and adore, the one we trust with our very lives, is not dead. He is alive and once again sits at the right hand of the Father. With them the Holy Spirit has come to teach, to be the very presence of God with us in our own time.

Christ is with us; God is with us. As God abides in the Son and the Son in God, God abides in and with us in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you want to know God, get to know his Son Jesus as revealed in scriptures and in the continuing presence and work of the Spirit.

You know Jesus and so you also know God and have seen God. Ask God to be with you in and through all of your life and the lives of others. Remember, whatever you request along the lines of who Jesus is and what Jesus did and continues to do, Jesus will do.

I speak to you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.