

Comfort, claims and promises

sermon discussion guide

based on John 14.1-14 from 3/3/19

which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

Intro: What do you think it would have been like to have been in the upper room with Jesus at the last supper? How would you have felt, having Jesus wash *your* feet?

You probably won't have time to cover all of this passage – there's so much in here! Maybe agree as a group which 2 of the 3 sections you want to discuss together – then do the Up-In-Out as well.

Section 1 - comfort

Read John 14.1-3

Jesus had been understandably 'deeply troubled' (13.21) about the impending events, but here he offers comfort to his disciples, and calls on them to trust him.

What situations are your hearts troubled by at the moment?

How easy are you finding it to trust God's timing and plan at the moment?

Jesus offers some specific reassurances about heaven (v2-3) – there's plenty of room; he's preparing the place; he'll come back to take us; we'll be with him. Which of those reassurances is most precious to you at the moment? Why?

Section 2 – claims

Read John 14.4-11

How do you feel about the exclusivity of Jesus' claims (ie "I am *the* way, *the* truth and *the* life. *No-one* comes to the Father except through me" - not just "I am *a* way, *a* truth and *a* life. *There are other ways to the Father as well*")?

What do your friends feel about the exclusivity of Jesus' claims?

Why is it significant that only Jesus could prepare the way to the place he was going (see John 13.33, 36)?

How can we gently point out to unbelievers the arrogance of pluralism – the view that all roads lead to God?

In our 'post-truth' age of fake news and 'personal truth' - how can it be good news that Jesus provides an absolute truth – a plumbline by which to test truth claims?

Which element of Jesus' claim is most important to you at the moment – that he is the Way, the Truth, or the Life? Why?

Section 3 - promises

Read John 14.12-14

In what ways are the actions of the disciples (and us) 'greater' than those that Jesus did?

Why does Jesus tie our ability to do 'greater things' to his going to the Father?

What does it mean to pray "in Jesus' name"?

Do you tend to pray 'big' prayers or 'small' prayers? Why?

Why was bringing glory to the Father such a motivation for Jesus (see also 13.31-32)?

How can it be a motivation for us?

Up: try the prayer exercise (overleaf)

In: How could you spur one another on to pray bigger, bolder prayers in response to Jesus' promises?

Out: A friend says, "The problem with you Christians is that you're so arrogant – claiming that your way is better than anyone else's way." How could you respond?

A suggested prayer exercise based on John 14.1

Take a piece of paper, and draw round someone's hands – to represent Jesus' hands.

As a title, write on 'Jesus says, "Trust me. I've got you covered."'

Then give everyone some small pieces of paper or post-its, and ask them to write down any situations they're struggling with at the moment (a separate piece of paper / post-it for each situation).

Get people also to write down any negative emotions they've experienced recently. (You might find it helpful to think through the emotions the disciples would have felt on Thursday evening, Friday evening, Saturday evening, Sunday morning – to help you think of a range of emotions.)

Now encourage people to quietly put all their pieces of paper into Jesus' hands as an expression of trusting him.

Pray for one another, as the Spirit leads you.