

97. The manifestation of the Trinity

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Many commercials and advertisements we see on TV, in magazines, and newspapers have one thing in common. They are very good at making promises, actually over-promising, but much under-delivering.

Promise requires two important elements – willingness and capability of the promise maker and trust of the promise recipient. I am sure that you've heard a phrase, "A promise is only as good as the person who makes the promise." But I believe that it also demands the recipient's trust in the promise maker.

Our great God makes many thousands of promises in this Bible, to be exact 7,487 promises to mankind. He has kept every single one of them and will keep the rest. So God has no problem in keeping promises because of His willingness and capability. But remember what it requires from recipients? Trust. When a believer is asked what he or she does with the promises of God, some of them will say, "I underline them in my Bible," or "I have them in picture frames on my walls," or "I memorize them," or "Am I supposed to do something with them?" The best answer is "I live by them."

In this section of the upper room discourse that we have been studying, our Lord Jesus gave His disciples many promises. He promised to prepare a place for them in heaven when He returns. He promised that they would do greater works than even He had done. He promised that He would dispatch the Third Person of the Trinity called, "the Holy Spirit" who would be their Comforter, Counselor, or Helper. And He would reside in their hearts forever.

From v19 to v24, Jesus will even make a greater promise – the manifestation of the Trinity in our lives.

A. ONENESS WITH THE TRINITY

John 14:19-20 "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

Less than 18 hours from this point, Jesus would be crucified and the enemies of God would rejoice in their wicked glee.

As many of you already know, the meaning of "the world" in the NT represents the unbelievers who choose to reject God with one reason or another. They are not rejecting the truth and Jesus because He and His truth are wrong, but they reveal their sins. That is one of the main reasons why the Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus. And that is why liberals and the homosexual community have so much hatred against Christianity and the Bible.

To the unbelievers' physical eyes, Jesus would no longer exist after the crucifixion. But to the believers of Jesus Christ, He reveals His glory and we will see Him face to face in heaven.

V19 reminds me of another one that explains it better:

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural man, the person without Jesus Christ, is not alive to God, even though he is alive physically. Unless he becomes a born-again person, he can't detect when God is working and he has no concept of what Christ is doing. He has no way to comprehend the work of the Holy Spirit, it doesn't even register in his mind, because he is dead to the spiritual dimension. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the truth. Apart from Him, people cannot know the truth; they cannot understand the truth; they cannot discover the truth.

Go back to the second half of this verse: "*Because I live, you will live also.*" See that? Jesus is reminding His disciples about His resurrection that would start the resurrections of the believers of Jesus Christ after their death.

You can tell what Jesus is telling us in v20 – the oneness of the believers with the Lord Jesus, God the Father, and God the Spirit. The coming of the Spirit to indwell in the hearts of believers would bring the realization that the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are united in purpose and operation and that there would be a new intimate relationship between the Trinity and believers.

B. LOVING GOD MEANS DOING WHAT HE TELLS US

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

In v15, Jesus already made it clear to us:

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

But Jesus knows us so well that we often try to ignore it, or circumvent what we are supposed to do, so He is reminding us again.

Allow me to expound it a little here:

When a person becomes a born-again Christian, he will start to experience many changes in his life. Spiritually, he starts to see the ugliness of his own sinful life in the way God sees it. Because the Holy Spirit, who just came into his heart at the moment of his salvation, starts to clean his heart by showing him right and wrong according to God's holiness and righteousness.

The things that he used to do without any hint of guilt now disgust him and he doesn't want to do them anymore. Because though he may not have a lot of Bible knowledge, if he continued what he used to do, they would not please his Savior Lord Jesus. In other words, he loves his God, Jesus, enough to give up the things that he used to love to do.

Listen, all born-again Christians should make conscious decisions about what to do and what not to do in everything according to what pleases the Lord Jesus, not according to what pleases ourselves carnally.

Naturally, this explanation brings a self-examination to all of us. If you say that you are a born-again Christian, but there is no evidence of major changes in your spiritual and physical life after you were saved, you really need to ask yourself if you are truly saved.

1 John 2:4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

At this point, some of you are thinking, "Oh, bummer! I must not be a born-again, because I blow it often." Relax, having that thought itself proves that you are a born-

again Christian. Does God know that we continually sin as long as we are in this sin-oriented body? You think? Yes, He does.

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

It's not a question of perfect deeds, rather it's a question of desire. I believe that what Christ is talking about here is the inward longing desire to please our Savior and Lord, although the deeds are extremely important. The one who really loves Jesus Christ will have a burning desire to obey Him. Did you get that? He will fail from time to time, but his desire to obey Christ is the key.

Let me put this in terms of the relationship between a husband and a wife. When a husband loves his wife, he wants to do what pleases his wife. After the wedding ceremony, he would not flirt with some other women or have sex with them. If he does, you can tell that he doesn't love his wife. He deserves a good whack on the upside of his head from his wife. It is not a matter of obligation as her husband, but a matter of his love for her.

Love is the highest of motivations and when we love the Lord, we desire to please Him by obeying Him.

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

C. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE TRINITY IN OUR LIVES

John 14:22-24 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to 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. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

Now there was one guy who didn't quite get it. And I'm sure that the rest of the disciples really were dumbfounded at this point. One of them speaks up in v22. His name is Judas and this is not Judas Iscariot the traitor, rather this is Judas a.k.a. Thaddaeus.

Judas could not understand how Jesus would appear to the disciples without appearing to the general public at the same time. Either Jesus would be visible or He would not. For Judas there was no possibility of both.

Jesus, in His reply in v23, did not discuss the question of post-resurrection appearances. He focused the disciples' attention to the broader understanding that would come to them through obedience to His known teaching and through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The reality of Jesus' and the presence of the Father would be conditioned on our obedience which is an outcome of a person's love for Jesus.

When the sinner trusts Christ, he is born again and the Spirit immediately enters his body and bears witness that he is a child of God. The Spirit stays with that person and will not depart. As the believer yields to the Father, loves the Word, prays, and obeys, there is a deeper relationship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. Salvation means we are going to heaven, but our submission means the manifestation of the Trinity in our hearts!

Our experience with God ought to go deeper and deeper, and it will as we yield to the Spirit of Truth and permit Him to teach us and guide us. If we love God and obey Him, He will manifest His love to us in a deeper way each day.

Think about what we just learned – the Trinity, all three Persons of Godhead manifest Himself in our hearts. Just as the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon’s temple, so the Trinity will fill our hearts with Their majestic presence. And that light residing in us is sufficient to dispel even the darkest and most hideous shadows of doubts from the evil one.

I am sure that you’ve heard a phrase, “Two is company, but three’s a crowd.” Having the Trinity in our hearts is not like having three of your in-laws in your home for the rest of your life. There is a perfect harmony in the Trinity and we will have His peace that only comes from the Lord. Peace is not the absence of affliction, rather the presence of God.

V24 closes with a negative note for the people who choose not to love Jesus and not to keep His Word. Let’s take a look at it again:

John 14:24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

Those who reject Jesus’ words are rejecting the words of the Father in heaven. There is a Greek phrase for this – “They are in a deep poopoo.”

D. APPLICATIONS

1) The hands of God will never lead us where the grace of God and the promises of God cannot keep us.

2) We, the believers of Jesus Christ should make conscious decisions about what to do and what not to do in everything according to what pleases the Lord Jesus, not according to what pleases ourselves carnally.

3) The reality of Jesus’ and the Father’s presence would be conditioned on our obedience which is an outcome of a person’s love for Jesus.