

John 14:8-11

Dear Friends in Christ,

We have a problem. All people of all time have felt that there must be something, some force, some higher power, something greater than ourselves. People of all times have felt that there must be something more than this short life on earth, some kind of continued existence. We know why this is. It's because we have been created in the image of God. It's because God has given witness of his invisible qualities in nature. **The heavens declare the glory of God.** But we want more. We want proof. We want to see God and have him prove himself to us. We want him to meet our expectations. But what if he did meet our expectations? Would that be enough for us?

Jesus uses Philip as an example to show us that what we see with our physical eyes is never enough. Only what we see with the eyes of faith is enough.

Jesus had just spoken what for many people are some of the most wonderful and comforting words in all of Scripture. He told his disciples that his Father's house has many rooms and that he was going there to prepare a place for them. When everything was ready, he would come back and take them to be with him. But Philip was struggling with these words. Where was this place and who was the Father Jesus was talking about? How could he be sure Jesus was telling the truth? So Philip made a request. **Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.** If only you would make God appear to us, if we could see him with our own eyes, then we could believe, then we could be sure that what you are telling us is true.

It sounds good. It sounds logical. At some point in our lives we have, or will, wish the same thing. But let's think about how wanting God to show himself has usually worked out.

When Israel was in the desert they saw a visible indication of the presence of God. He showed himself in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. They saw a visible indication of his presence on Mt. Sinai with the clouds and fire and earthquake, and they actually heard his voice speaking the Ten Commandments to them. The elders of Israel went up on the mountain and the Bible says **they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.** We heard in our Old Testament reading how God showed his presence with Elijah by answering his prayer and sending down fire to consume the sacrifice. But, what was the effect of such things? Did Israel remain faithful to God? Did Ahab and Jezebel give up on Baal and become believers in the true God? No.

Or consider Philip and the other Apostles. They were with Jesus for three years. They heard him teach every day. Who can count all the miracles they saw him perform? John says at the end of his gospel that there are many more miracles that Jesus did that are not recorded because to record all of them would fill too many books. So when Philip says, **show us the Father and that will be enough for us,** Jesus says, "How can you say that **after I have been among you such a long time!**"

What Solomon said about money is also true about setting expectations for God. **Whoever loves money never has money enough.** Whoever sets expectations for God, whoever says, "God, if you do this miracle, or if you show yourself in this way, that will be enough, then I'll believe" is kidding themselves; it will never be enough. Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal and Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead seem to make this abundantly clear. If we say to God, "just do this, just show yourself in this way, and that will be enough", and he does it, our sinful hearts will say, like Philip, "well, how about doing one more thing and that will be

enough.” God knows our sinful hearts. He knows that no matter what we see with our physical eyes will never be enough to satisfy our hearts. He knows that if he did what we really want, if he appeared to us as he really is, in the fullness of his glory as God, he would destroy us. It would be like getting too close to the sun, or like being at ground zero of a nuclear blast. There might be a second of thinking, “that’s awesome,” before you are incinerated. Sinful people can’t see God in his full glory and live. But, the Bible says, that in Jesus the **fullness of the deity, of God, lives in bodily form.**

This is the truth that Jesus was trying to get across to Philip and the other disciples, and to us. Three times in these verses Jesus makes this point. He says, **Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? It is the Father living in me who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.**

Because we have been created in God’s image and have the desire to see and know God, but if God were to grant our wish and appear to us in his full glory we would be destroyed, God has chosen to reveal himself by hiding himself in Jesus.

It is only in Jesus that we see the truth about God. In Jesus we see that he loves us and wants us to know him. We could not come to him so he found a way to come to us. We could not even stand to hear his voice speaking from heaven. When he did that at Mt. Sinai the people begged Moses to have him stop; even that was too terrifying for them. So, **in the past he spoke to us through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son.** Jesus and the Father are one, so if you want to see the Father, if you want to know what he is like and what he can do, look at Jesus. If you want to hear the Father speak, listen to Jesus.

In Jesus we see the Father’s power, the power to still storms, to heal every sickness and disease, to cast out demons and to raise the dead.

In Jesus we see the Father’s mercy, coming not to be served but to serve; his desire to save us who are hopelessly lost and deserving only his punishment.

In Jesus we see the Father’s desire to forgive in his willingness to make himself the sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the world, in his prayer from the cross, **Father forgive them.**

But Philip saw Jesus standing right in front of him. He heard what Jesus was saying. And yet he said, **Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough!** What we see with our physical eyes is never enough. As Jesus would later tell Thomas, **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.** It all comes down to faith. Only what we see through the eyes of faith is enough.

Jesus told Philip, **Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.** Believe what I say. It’s not something you can see with your physical eyes. You can’t physically see the Father living in me. It’s a matter of faith.

Jesus says to us and to all people of all time, **I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** And we want to object. We want to come up with all kinds of questions, what about those who have sincere beliefs in something other than your, Jesus? What about people in remote corners of the jungle? These are all questions that Satan uses to try to distract us and to have God meet our expectations before we will believe.

What does Jesus say? He says in very simple, clear language that even children can understand that he is the way. He doesn’t say that he will show us the way, but that he is the way. He says that he is the truth. He doesn’t say that he will show us the truth, but that he is

the truth. He says that he is the life. Again he doesn't say that he will show us the way to have life, but that he is the life. Without him there is no way, no truth and no life. He and the Father are one and no one can come to the Father except through him. Jesus is enough. If you have Jesus you have everything. If you don't have Jesus you have nothing.

This is the truth that Jesus holds out to the world. He tells Philip and he tells us, if we have trouble believing what he says we should remember his miracles. They were performed by him as signs, evidence that he is who he claims to be and that what he says is the truth. Philip had yet to see the miracles of Jesus' resurrection and his ascension. It would seem that in the end he looked at Jesus through the eyes of faith and saw the Father.

May God grant that the Holy Spirit is at work today and every day working in our hearts so that we look at Jesus with the eyes of faith and see the Father; that we see through the eyes of faith that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life; that he is enough for us, for only in him do we know the father and have life.