

TEXT

**Holy Gospel: John 14:1-14**

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>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? <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>And you know the way to where I am going." <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to him, "I am the way,

and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

<sup>8</sup>Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." <sup>9</sup>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'? <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>Believe me that I

am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."

Grace, peace and mercy be unto you from God our Father and from our Lord and from our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen  
Intro. As many of you know one of my favorite Christian authors is C.S. Lewis. He wrote a series of seven children's books with an analogy of faith entitled 'The Chronicles of Narnia'. Next month one of C.S. Lewis's books 'Prince Caspian' will come out as a movie. I recommend you to see it with your children or grandchildren.

C.S. Lewis was an agnostic. An agnostic is someone who believes the possibility of an impersonal higher power 'the big man upstairs' so to speak, but doesn't believe that such a god can be personally known by us. Thus, 'a' means without, 'gnosis' the Greek word for knowledge, 'agnostic'. C.S. Lewis, however, is converted as an agnostic to Christianity. And as a Christian he writes a book entitled 'Mere Christianity' as a defense of his new Christian faith. I printed a quote by C.S. Lewis from 'Mere Christianity' on the back page of your bulletin which fits with my message for today entitled, based upon our Gospel lesson, John 14:

**'LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON'**

I quote from C.S. Lewis: 'I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Jesus: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God'. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic, on the level of the man who says he is a poached egg or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man, Jesus, was and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse'. (C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity [New York: Macmillian, 1952] p. 41-42).

Far too often we take for granted the way Jesus lets the words '**My Father**' come so naturally from His lips. And we loose the power of those words. Such as in our Gospel lesson for today, **John 14, 'in My Father's house are many rooms'**. For the Jews of Jesus' day that mere, simple phrase '**My Father**' would have been shocking. Again and again Jesus referred to Himself in the closest possible relationship with God as '**My Father**'. And that expression did not go unnoticed by the Jews.

**John 5 says after Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath 'the Jews tried all the harder to kill Jesus, not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God'**. Jesus was no agnostic, Jesus was the ultimate 'mere' Christian as we claim to be with a close personal relationship with God as 'Our Father who art in heaven'. That fact is shocking, awesome!

Where did Jesus get the audacity to say '**believe in God, believe also in Me**'. Who is this Jesus? And while you're at it think of where you get the audacity to say '**Our Father who art in heaven**'. The source is the same!

Where does a 'no name' carpenter from a 'no place' like Nazareth in 'no where' place like Galilee get the gall to say, '**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me**'. Jesus' statements in our Gospel lesson and else where in God's Word ought to take our breath away for their boldness. Or maybe just the opposite they should give us the breath, the Spirit, to have the audacity to say '**I believe that Jesus is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God ... God's only Son, my Lord**'. Either Jesus' words are true or He is a liar or a lunatic. And if Jesus is a lunatic, a poached egg and a liar which is what the word devil means. He can't be our God and Savior. And if Jesus is not whom He says He is then we are liars and lunatics to be so bold to call God '**Our Father who art in heaven**'.

And that is what I want to talk to you a little bit about today:

**'LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON = Mere Christianity'** simply believing Jesus is who He says He is.

1. First of all we should believe Jesus is the very nature of God because Jesus speaks the very words of God. As was promised way back in **Deuteronomy 18** to Moses and the children of Israel '**the Lord says, 'I will raise up for the people a prophet ... I will put My Words in His mouth and He will tell you everything I command Him'**. Jesus is that prophet promised by God. Not only 'a' prophet but Jesus is 'the' prophet of God. Jesus speaks God's Word in it's truth. Jesus speaks the truth because He is the truth of God, the fulfillment of all the promises of God in the Old Testament. The word truth is the word 'amen' = it is for sure, it is true. Jesus is the 'amen'. Jesus is 'for sure' our God

and Savior because He 'fills full' He 'amens' God's promises all the way back to Genesis to Malachi. Remember a few Sundays ago, the two men on the road to Emmaus, **Luke 24: Jesus says 'How foolish you are, and how slow to heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ... and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself'**. Jesus speaks the very words of God. **Vs. 10 of our Gospel lesson Jesus says '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'**

That's the second reason we should believe Jesus is the very nature of God because Jesus does the very works of God. Jesus gives life **John 11 'I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies ... Jesus called in a loud voice 'Lazarus, come out' and the dead man came out'**. Jesus, is Creator of life, **Colossians 1 'He is the image of the invisible God ... for by Him all things were created'**. Jesus is our Judge, **John 8 'I judge, My decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent Me'**. Jesus is God because He speaks as God. Jesus, is God because He creates and judges and gives life as only God can.

And thirdly, we believe Jesus is the very nature of God because Jesus reveals to us the very attributes, the very character, the very person of God Himself. **1 John 4 'God is love ... and He lives in us because He has given us His Spirit ... and we testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world ... so we know and we rely on the love God has for us'**. God loves you in Jesus Christ!

### **LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON = Mere Christianity!**

It's as simple and plain and clear as we just sang in the children's song, 'Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so'. God is not merely 'the big man upstairs' impersonally removed from us as agnostics believe. But, God is love! And by Jesus' words, by Jesus' works, by Jesus' very attributes and character God loves you and me.

II. True to His Word! True to His work! True to His attributes and character of love Jesus did for us what only God in the flesh, God incarnate could do. Jesus did the impossible. Jesus as eternal God who cannot die, died on the cross for us sinners. Jesus as God took our place, the place we deserve to take under the Law and punishment and wrath of God's justice. But, instead, in our stead, in our place Jesus justified you and me, declared us 'just-if-I'd' never sinned in God's sight. Oh, the awesome audacity of Jesus!

True to His Word! True to His work! True to His attributes of love Jesus did what only God in the flesh, God incarnate could do. Jesus redeemed, He exchanged all of our sinfulness, all of our guilt for His righteousness, His forgiveness in God's sight. Oh, the awesome audacity of Jesus!

True to His Word! True to His work! True to His attributes of love Jesus did what only God in the flesh, God incarnate could do. He rose victorious from the dead, 'He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!' and He ascended into heaven 'to prepare a place for you'. Merely, simply, only and entirely because God loves you in Jesus Christ, as our God and Savior. Oh, the awesome audacity of Jesus!

True to His Word! True to His work! True to His attributes of love Jesus does what only God in the flesh, God incarnate can do, '**He comes again and He takes you to Himself'**. Which is what He is doing right now this very moment. It's not a future event, it is our present reality! Jesus is coming to you, drawing you to Himself into 'our' Father's house, into the kingdom of God, the Holy Christian Church, on earth and in heaven. As you merely, simply receive Jesus' Word, Jesus' work, Jesus' attributes of love given to you through His gifts of Word and Sacraments. That is the 'greater work of Jesus' we do, so to speak, that is 'Mere Christianity', simply receiving and sharing Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Conclusion: Jesus' words, Jesus' works, Jesus' attributes of love and grace and forgiveness confront every human as it confronted the famous agnostic C.S. Lewis with the question 'Who is this, Jesus?', a liar? a lunatic? or God incarnate our personal Savior? And who are those who believe in Jesus with the audacity to pray '**Our Father who art in heaven'**? When we grasp in our empty hand of faith 'the who' Jesus is = true God incarnate. Then the 'what' Jesus came to do, to be our Savior', falls into place. As a bumper sticker I once saw says 'Know Jesus, know God. No Jesus, No God'. No one short of God Himself could say the things or do the things Jesus said and did. When Jesus made statements such as '**I am in the Father and the Father is in Me'**. He was truly identifying by His very words, and works and attributes the truth of being:

### **'LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON'**

We rejoice in a God and Savior, who is who He is and who did what He did and who makes good on what He promises to us: '**I am going to My Father's house to prepare a place for you'**.

Simply receive it! It's yours! You have God's Word and work and attribute of love on it! It is simply 'Mere Christianity'. Amen

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, our Savior. Amen