

I Will Come Again
March 19, 2023
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John 13:31-14:6

Some of the most famous scenes in movies are the “goodbye” scenes. Remember Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman at the airport in Casablanca? How about Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh at the door in Gone With The Wind (I won't quote it)? Did you cry when ET pointed his glowing finger to Elliott's forehead and said, “*I'll be right here?*” Goodbyes can be sad.

Ever hear of the “Irish Goodbye?” It's the term for ducking out of a social gathering without saying goodbye. Some attribute it to the Irish Potato Famine of 1845-52 when many Irish fled for America. With no airplanes, phones, or Internet, in those days they knew it would likely be a final departure and supposedly they would just leave to avoid a sad goodbye.ⁱ

Farewells can be sad but they can also be very important. Every year on George Washington's birthday the U.S. Senate reads his famous “Farewell Address.” In that address our first president warned “...*that the stability of the Republic was threatened by the forces of geographical sectionalism, political factionalism, and interference by foreign powers in the nation's domestic affairs.*”ⁱⁱ He even warned that political parties “...*carried the seeds of the nation's destruction through petty factionalism.*”ⁱⁱⁱ

Today's text is the beginning of Jesus' farewell address to His eleven loyal disciples [Judas had just left to betray him.] The next day Jesus would be crucified and they would be scattered and shattered, but He was looking ahead to when He would ascend back to His Father in Heaven. In these fourteen verses we read some of Jesus' most memorable and important statements. Not only did He address their sadness and anxiety with assurances, He left them (and us) with instructions about how His followers are to live until He comes back.

The point: When Jesus went back to Heaven, He left His followers both assurances and assignments. We are to embrace both so we're ready when He comes back to move us to our eternal home with Him.

Some context before the text: It was the upper room, Jesus had washed the feet of the disciples in a show of servant leadership, they had supper, and Judas the betrayer had gone to do his dirty deed.

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. **32** If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. **33** Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will

seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'

- As we said last week, we would say, "crucified" but Jesus said, "glorified."
- Jesus was looking beyond the horror of the cross to the glory of God.
- As **Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)** puts it: *"who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*
- Everything Jesus did on earth was to glorify the Father. His sacrifice on the cross was the ultimate glorification (John 17:4)

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

- This was a new commandment but not a new concept.
- **Leviticus 19:18 (ESV) — 18** ...you shall love your neighbor as yourself...
- Why is it hard to love one another? How can Christ-followers do this?
- This commandment was "new" in that it was a higher standard.
- John MacArthur writes, *"...it was sacrificial love modeled after His love, and it is produced through the New Covenant by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit."*^v
- Task #1 from Jesus: Love one another as I have loved you and I'm giving you the Holy Spirit to equip you to do that. He always equips the called when we struggle with loving someone we need to ask for that equipping.

36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." **37** Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." **38** Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

- Peter's failure would be the launching pad for his restoration and ministry.
- The reminder for us: Jesus knows we will mess up yet He still loves us and gives us the grace to turn around and start over in repentance.
- Jesus of course knew their thoughts. *"If Peter is going to mess up, what about the rest of us? Jesus says He's going somewhere we can't go, this is so hard to wrap our minds around, it's so stressful!"* Jesus said:

1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. **2** 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? **3** 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.

- Task #2 from Jesus: My followers shouldn't be troubled. Why is that?

- Task #3: Believe in God and in Jesus. That word “believe” means, to “believe to the extent of complete trust.” TRUST and don’t be troubled.
- How has your life experience helped you to trust Him and not be troubled?
- The Promise: I go to prepare a place in my Father’s “house” and I will come again and take you there to live with me forever!
- Task #4: Embrace that promise with passion and encouragement.
- **Colossians 3:4 (ESV) — 4** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. **Romans 15:13 (ESV) — 13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

4 And you know the way to where I am going.” **5** Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

- They call him “Doubting Thomas” but I believe he sincerely wanted to understand things because he sincerely wanted to be with Jesus.

6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- Some refuse to believe that statement, but no one can misunderstand it.
- This statement gives us the “GPS coordinates” to our Heavenly home.
- Jesus is the ONLY way to eternal life. That is the great non-negotiable!
- Thinking about what they would face when Jesus went back to Heaven, why was it important for Him to stress that He is the only way. Why is it important for us in the world we live in today?
- The reality that Jesus is the ONLY way to God the Father is the foundational truth His followers need in order to carry out His final instruction before He left for Heaven: “go and make disciples.”
- Any religion that points people anywhere other than Jesus is false religion.
- Task #5 – Embrace that truth as if your eternal life depends on it; it does.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Nixon’s farewell: “*You are here to say goodbye to us, and we don’t have a good word for it in English -- the best is au revoir. We’ll see you again.*”^{vi}
- Jesus was leaving but He promised to come back for His followers.
- This text makes me think of a Dad leaving the family to scope out a new city before they move. He says, “*I’m going to arrange for where we will live. Get things ready while I’m gone and I’ll be back to get you so we can be together in that new city.*” [Illustration: Susan’s Grandfather’s goodbye]
- When Jesus went back to Heaven, He left His followers both assurances and assignments. We are to embrace both so we’re ready when He comes back to move us to our eternal home with Him.
- Task #1 from Jesus: Love one another as I have loved you and I’m giving you the Holy Spirit to equip you to do that.

- Task #2 from Jesus: My followers shouldn't be troubled. Why is that?
- Task #3: Believe in God and in Jesus. That word "believe" means, to "believe to the extent of complete trust."ⁱⁱ TRUST and don't be troubled.
- Promise: I go to prepare a place in my Father's "house" and I will come again and take you there to live with me forever!
- Task #4: Embrace that promise with passion and encouragement.
- Any religion that points people anywhere other than Jesus is false religion.
- Task #5 – Embrace that truth as if your eternal life depends on it; it does.
- So, this week if your heart is troubled, just think about the hope of Heaven we have if we have trusted Jesus as the ONLY way to eternal life.

ⁱ <https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/irish-goodbye/>
<https://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/irish-goodbye-ghosting-frowned-etiquette-experts/story?id=22918760>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CDOC-106sdoc21/pdf/GPO-CDOC-106sdoc21.pdf>

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^{iv} The MacArthur Bible Commentary © 2005, John MacArthur

^v Swanson, J. (1997). [*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

^{vi} <https://www.historyplace.com/speeches/nixon-farewell.htm>

^{vii} Swanson, J. (1997). [*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.