

DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 2024 | JOHN 14:1-2

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 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?

John 14:1-2, ESV

THE PREPARED PLACE

In John 14-16, we can see a shift in Jesus' ministry when He changed focus from the public at large to His disciples to prepare them for a major transition. He was about to leave them, and they weren't ready. When He mentioned that He was going to a place they could not yet go, Peter was irritated and demanded to be allowed to go. Jesus addressed his confusion along with the rest and told them He was going to prepare a place for them. What was the place? Why was it necessary? How would they get there?

I attended another funeral last week where the text from John 14:1-3 was

used to give comfort to the remaining family and friends of the deceased. There was a lot of talk about mansions, streets of gold, and living close to Jesus in the neighborhood. All of this was emphasized to build hope that death is not the end. But as I take a deeper look at this passage, I am struck by how much more Jesus was talking to His disciples about. He wasn't preparing them for retirement in a nice neighborhood with spacious porches and pleasant vistas. He wasn't going to buy furniture for their mansions. He was going to the cross. He would be alone. He would experience the darkness of hell. He would

face wrath, and no one would really understand. He would be placed in a borrowed tomb and grieved. He would rise again and visit with His own disciples before ascending to the right hand of the Father to rule over all that His blood purchased. He would send the Holy Spirit to make real the place He prepared for His disciples. Of course Peter and the others couldn't follow Him on this journey, but they could and would enjoy the benefits of the place He prepared for them as they embraced the mission that He left for them. Little did they know how much they would need what He prepared. He left them the mission of implementing the victory He had won on the cross over the forces of hell. They would be pushing back the darkness of evil and demonstrating the power of a love that never fails.

I don't want to diminish the hope of living forever in the mansion of the Father's house, but I do want to go ahead and enjoy the fruit of living from that place now. **Jesus prepared a place in the Father that equips us to fulfill the purpose for which we are made.** Let's look at a few of the benefits He mentioned that can be accessed now:

He prepared a place of unique personal knowledge of the Father. The life that Jesus was demonstrating while on earth was the eternal life He talked so much about. He left no question about its nature: *"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent"* (John 17:3, ESV). This is divine intimacy. It is a relationship that cannot be severed by failure. It is self-disclosure on the part of God to His own that makes them want to bear all in the presence of grace. It is the kind of intimate love that answers the existential question humans always ask: "Am I known and will I be tolerated if I am?" The Father makes it clear that He knows us and will never stop loving us. He not only tolerates us, but delights in us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or anger, or sword?...NO, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Romans 8:25-37, ESV

As the disciples ventured into the hostile world of darkness, they would

need to know that their connection to the Father is secure.

He prepared a place of adequate provision. Humans are haunted by the fear that they won't have enough physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial supplies to last until the end. When they get settled into the prepared place, they will understand that they live with the great "I am!" They cannot have lack when they are in the presence of everything. Jesus demonstrated this by feeding 5000, borrowing a donkey when it was needed, and using another man's tomb for a weekend. He never sensed a lack. He and the Father are one.

He prepared a place of love-driven obedience. Jesus didn't operate out of duty, but love. The life He gives to His own is the same. Each of His own has been captured by a love that not only forgives, but empowers. Loved people are bound to love. Like the woman who "wasted" a very expensive perfume on Jesus, loved people are extravagant with their generosity. They are energized to love and then energized by loving. When living from the prepared place, they know that living by the rules is not what eternal life is really about. They live beyond the

rules, not outside them.

He prepared a place of fulfilled promise. Israel had been the instrument of God's choice in preparing for the great day of the Lord. That nation had provided the shadow of the substance that is Jesus. He was born of a woman (human) and under the Law (Jew). He fulfills the covenant God had made with Israel through Moses. He is the true vine! The pages of the Old Testament are filled with references to the vine and vineyard as metaphors of Israel's role in the story. Jesus declares the new vine. He is the true vine. His disciples are the branches that will display the fruit of the gospel. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the grave is the Spirit that lives in the believers.

He prepared a place of shared joy. Jesus experienced the ultimate joy of finishing the work of redemption. He did all that was necessary to reclaim the lost territory, redeem the enslaved people, and restore His purpose on earth. He is exalted in heaven and on earth by all who know who He is. He shares that joy with His "branches." We get to partner with Him in enjoying the fruit of His work. What He purchased will be claimed, and we are

privileged to be the agents through which that happens. The book of Acts details some of the events that show what it looks like for the kingdom of God to work its way through the lump of dough. As we continue to invade the realms of darkness, our joy will join His. He shares His glory with us.

He prepared a place of Spirit-aided mission. Jesus declared to His disciples that there is a dual witness in the world. They would go forth with His authority, preaching the gospel. The Spirit would be working behind the scenes, convicting the heart. This is the dynamic with all those who know Him. He will convict the world of its error regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment. We can't win with just arguments, but we don't have to. He works on the hearts while our message and demeanor reflect the gospel of Jesus. We are working from an advantage and have no reason to ever be intimidated.

He prepared a place of constant peace. Jesus reminded His disciples that in spite of their new-found confidence and zeal, they would abandon Him that very night. They would scatter to their own homes and vocations. Jesus knew that would

happen, and He loved them anyway. Their failure was necessary for them to be equipped to do their work. They would discover the finite limitations of their own faithfulness. They would be given eyes to see that their own strength was not enough, but would find His fully adequate. Knowing we cannot fail enough to be cast out gives peace in the midst of persecution or praise. Peter's story of restoration after His dismal failure gives us all peace. Jesus knows us well. And He can't stop loving us.

It is not necessary for us to die physically to get into the prepared place. We can go now. Jesus has shown us the way.

**KERYGMA VENTURES**

P.O. Box 2022
Colleyville, TX 76034
(817)267-9224
Email: Contact@kerygmaventures.com
www.KerygmaVentures.com