

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev John Morrison

- [0 : 0 0] The Gospel according to John, chapter 14. We could read again from the 8th verse. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us.
- Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.
- And how saith thou then, show us the Father? Especially these words, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.
- Now there is no doubt, friends, that the written word of God is precious in its entirety to all God's people.
- And whilst that is true, nevertheless, there are certain parts of the inspired word to which they are more attracted than other parts.
- [1 : 0 5] It wouldn't surprise one to know, but maybe the book of Psalms is the most popular book in the Old Testament. All because of the varied experiences of the psalms.
- Of course, David wasn't the only one who composed the psalms. He composed the vast majority of them. His varied experiences in the psalms, the encouragements, exhortations, and such things.
- And they find all that very helpful. And it is a book, of course, that is frequently read. And then when we turn to the New Testament, it is maintained that the Gospel according to John is the most popular of the four Gospels.
- And that chapters 14 to 17 are amongst the most popular chapters there. Well, be that as it may, friends, it is true that the whole world is inspired and that it is all precious to its people.
- But in looking at any particular event in the Gospels, whether it be a parable or a miracle or some other account, it is always wise to take the four Gospels together.
- [2 : 3 3] Because invariably you will discover that that same parable or a miracle or whatever, that it is also recorded by one, two, or even by three of the other evangelists as well.
- And only by taking the whole four Gospels together can we possibly have a clearer and a fuller picture of that account. Now my reason for raising this point is this.
- It is always easy for us to castigate maybe Simon Peter for denying his Lord. Or Thomas for being so doubtful. Or Philip for being so confused in his understanding at this time.
- But of course none of the apostles can be excused. You know yourselves when Jesus was finally arrested, how they all fled.
- And we find John, as it were, on the periphery of the crowd there with Mary when Jesus was crucified. And we are told that Peter followed afar off.
- [3 : 4 8] So it is all very well for us to castigate Philip for what he said here. But then of course we must realize that there are many doctrines still mysterious to us.
- Take for example the Trinity. Is it not a mysterious doctrine? Or the personality of the Holy Spirit? Or the union of the two natures in the person of Christ?

These are mysteries. And yet we have many books at our disposal. We have many spiritual privileges. We have the exposition of the word.

And these doctrines are still a great mystery to us. And yet it is our duty to preach the whole counsel of God. It is our duty to deal with all these doctrines.

But who, friends in our midst, would have the temerity to claim that he or she understands, not only the doctrines I have mentioned, but others beside, understand them so thoroughly that they are no longer a mystery to them.

[5 : 06] So how can we then castigate Philip for being rather confused in his understanding of this particular doctrine at this time?

Now we are looking then at these words tonight. I would like to look at them under three headings. First of all, we find oneness emphasized in these words.

He that has seen me hath seen the Father. And secondly, I would like to look at what of the Father is seen in the Son.

He that has seen me hath seen the Father. And thirdly, I would like to look at the nature of the vision spoken of here and its concomitance.

He that hath seen me hath seen my Father also. Let us look then at the first of these points.

[6 : 11] One thing we can say with absolute certainty is this, that the oneness spoken of here is not oneness of personality.

We can say that without any doubt whatsoever. Friends, we have all learned the Shorter Catechism since childhood. And it would do all our people throughout all our congregations a lot of good to study that little booklet thoroughly.

It is so full of doctrine, so full of teaching. You know yourselves, the question there on how many persons are there in the Godhead, and the answer is that there are three persons in the Godhead.

So, to begin with then, we can say with safety that oneness of persons is not meant here at all.

We can also say with certainty that because oneness of personality is not meant here, that neither is of course personal properties meant here by Jesus either.

[7 : 40] Because as the question puts it, there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Three persons, and each person has his own properties.

Now, the theologians speak of the essential trinity as it is defined for us there in the Shorter Catechism. They also speak of what is known as the economic trinity.

That is, each person has his own worth. The Father is the moving cause of salvation. He is the one who planned. The Son is the one who assumed human nature, who underwent the miseries of this life, and finally the cursed death of the cross.

And it belongs to the office of the Holy Spirit to apply the redemption Christ has purchased and to sanctify God's people. That is just basically what is meant by the economic trinity.

And that being so, each person of course has his own properties. And the oneness spoken of here has nothing to do with the personal properties.

[8 : 54] Neither of course has the oneness here anything to do with the humanity of Christ. Although the three persons are equal in substance, power, and glory, nevertheless it belongs to the second person, to the Son alone, to be both God and man.

So in that sense, he differs from the Father and the Holy Spirit. And you know, friends, it is condescension indeed that he who was more of all should have laid aside his glory and should have assumed our nature and suffered in this world on behalf of sinners who was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of him.

Now, by likeness there, of course, the scripture is not for one moment suggesting that his humanity wasn't real.

There is a heresy, of course, which says that the humanity of Christ was nothing more than just a mere likeness. And the appeal, of course, to various instances in the Old Testament where angels took upon them the form of men and in particular that incident in Genesis when the three men appeared to Abraham prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

And we know from the narrative that he actually initially received them as men. And we know from the tenor that the conversation transpired between Abraham and their spokesman that the spokesman was no other than the Lord himself.

[11 : 03] And yet he there appeared in the form of man. So they argue that Christ's humanity was only a likeness, that it wasn't real. And then we appeal to Romans chapter 8 and verse 3 where Paul speaks of him being made in the likeness of sinful man.

And likeness there, of course, is not to be connected to man, but to sinful. He was made sin who knew no sin.

But he wasn't at all made in the likeness of man. He was through man. He was given a body and a reasonable soul.

And he, therefore, is the God. I just wanted to slot that in in the passing. So it has nothing, of course, to do with his humanity. So where, then, do we find this oneness?

Well, going back again to the Shorter Catholicism, it keeps us right. And what is the Shorter Catholicism? We say there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one God, the same in substance.

[12 : 16] So there we see the oneness to begin with. We mustn't think, friends, of the Trinity as, or rather, we mustn't think of each person of the Trinity as if he possessed one-third of the whole of the divine essence.

That is not so. If that were so, how could you call the Father, God the Father? Or the Son, God the Son? Or the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit?

Instead, the whole of the substance of the divine essence belongs to each of the persons. So we see, then, that there is oneness with the Father in terms of substance.

And then, following on from substance, we see that there is oneness with the Father in terms of essential properties.

I mentioned earlier that there is no oneness with the Father in terms of personal properties. But here I'm saying that there is oneness in terms of essential properties.

[13 : 33] There must be. Because if each person, if the whole of the divine essence belongs to each person, then it logically follows that the properties of the divine essence must also belong to each person.

Let us, then, give you a few examples. We know from Scripture that God is omnipresent. Supposing we have no other passage to appeal to, but the psalm of first singing tonight, Psalm 139.

The psalmist there, of course, asks a question, a very pertinent question. Whither shall I flee from thy presence? And he goes on, he brings us into eternity, he brings us into time.

If I make my bed in hell, know thou art there. If I ascend up into heaven, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there, Lord, shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall uphold me.

The only presence of God is such, he's every fair, at once. How great is God. So we mustn't think of God as being local, and then absenting himself from that particular point, and going somewhere else.

[14 : 57] He cannot do that, because he's everywhere, all at once. So, there is no absconding from God. And you here this evening who are sinners, remember, you cannot hide from God.

There is no hiding place. So, God, therefore, is omnipresent. But then, omnipresence is also attributed to the Son.

Where the two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. We also know that omniscience belongs to the Father.

That is, he is all seeing, he is all understanding, all knowing. All knowledge is known to him. Past, all that's past to mankind, future to mankind, it is immediately present, and always present before that infinite mind.

How great our God is. And we sometimes mourn, friends, when lights go out here and there, and God removes filthy people from the sin of time.

[16 : 09] It's the salt of the earth, and how we miss them, and we mourn over their passing from this world. And we're tempted into believing that, well, that's, their prayers are ended.

There is no more intercession on our behalf. But no, friends, their prayers are there, present before this infinite mind. So all knowledge is known to him.

You cannot contribute to his knowledge. But we find that omniscience is also attributed to the Son. Remember when Peter was being interrogated.

There was one thing that was prerequisite to his embarking on that Great Commission, and that was love. And unless a person has love, the love of God in his heart, then, of course, he can't do God a service.

Because how can a willing service be done to God unless that obedience emanates from the heart? And Peter was almost feeling embarrassed, being there interrogated.

[17 : 15] And eventually he appealed to the omniscience of Christ. Lord, he said, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.

And then we also find that omnipotence, first of all, God is omnipotent. He has all power. And we mustn't think that the universe God has created, that has exhausted God's power.

We are such feeble creatures. When we have tried our utmost, when we have exerted and expended all our energy, we say, well, I've tried my best, there's nothing more I can do.

But you see, friends, God's power cannot be exhausted. He is omnipotent. He alone is almighty.

He is over all. And we rejoice in the sovereignty of God. But then, of course, we find omnipotence also attributed to the Son. Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 3.

[18 : 23] But unto the Son he said, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't it wonderful, friends, that his throne is forever and ever.

His kingship is an everlasting kingship. He is king of kings and lord of lords. And the subjects of his kingdom shall go on forever and ever.

And then, just before I leave the properties, we also find that immutability belongs to God. Remember what God says, that it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.

Because his compassions fail not, great is thy faithfulness. And then how Israel were told that, of course, they were not consumed.

Why? Because God changed not. So, God is unchangeable. But we find that immutability is also attributed to the Son.

[19 : 43] Yesterday, today, and forever. Isn't it wonderful, friends, that we see this oneness in terms of equality.

And if I just press it one step further, a lot more could be said on this point, we also see in point of will oneness. When we see there the Savior sweating, as it were, great drops of blood in the garden.

How he there finally acquiesced in the will of the Father. Not my will, but thine be done. And the Savior did nothing that was at any time at variance with the will of the Father.

So, let us leave in that first point there. Secondly, let us look then at what of the Father is seen in the Son. And that is, of course, by his people.

Now, you know yourselves that if you want to see the resemblance of a parent or parents in a child, the most likely place to see it is in the face, isn't it?

[20 : 57] One look at the face and immediately you can see the features of the father or of the mother. Of course, it can also be seen in the temperament, in other characteristics, but by and large in the face.

Now, the face of God, figuratively speaking, is seen in Christ. You know yourselves that God is a spirit. He has no physical parts.

And yet we find physical parts attributed to God to make him who is invisible more communicable and more intelligible to us. Otherwise, language would fail to remind us of who God is and to give us an understanding of him.

So, we find that various parts of the body being attributed to God in a figurative sense. And amongst them, we have the face. And if you turn there to Hebrews, again, I think it is Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 3.

I was going to double check that, but I think it's thrown about there. We are told there that, of course, Christ is, of course, the express image of his person.

[22 : 12] Now, Christ didn't say here, he that has seen me has seen a likeness to my father. That is not what he said. But he that has seen me has seen the father.

He is the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person. Or, it can also be put as the radiance of his glory, putting it literally, the representation of his reality.

That is putting it literally. He's not just a likeness. It's not just a likeness. He that has seen me has seen the father. A true representation of the father.

Now, you know yourselves, then, that the face betrays their emotions. Now, there are some people, and they're able to control and discipline and suppress their emotions to such an extent that they are never betrayed by their face.

I know of one man, and you can never figure out whether he was happy or sad, surprised or disappointed. He just seems the same always.

[23 : 23] But that is not true of many. Most of us, friends, cannot hide their emotions. So, when you look at a person's face, you can see their gentleness, or hardness, or hardness, or cruelty, joy, or sadness, surprise, or disappointment, acceptance, or rejection.

You have one look at the face, and you know immediately where you stand with a lot of people. Well, we see the face of the father in the son.

First of all, in terms of wrath. You know yourselves, if our passion is against you, one look at his face, and you know it. Well, let me now, friends, take you for a moment to Calvary.

And there you see the father's face set against the son in anger. Not that the son had done anything, nor was capable of doing anything that would anyway implicate the father's displeasure.

No, but his face was turned in anger against the very sin that he as the sin-bearer was there bearing on behalf of many. And remember this, friends, that a holy God and sin are irreconcilable.

[24 : 51] God can never be reconciled to sin. He can be reconciled to the sinner, but not to sin. Sin must be punished.

Sin must be destroyed. And you see there Christ's sufferings reaching a climax. And I suppose they reach their climax when you hear that cry of dereliction, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

God's anger against sin. But then when we also look at Calvary, we see there the face of love.

Don't we? God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The face of God shined there also in love. Why did God send his only begotten son into this world?

[25 : 55] Why, friends? Who can answer that question? In the nearest, we can go to it is by looking to the moving cause of salvation.

And the moving cause of salvation was love. We can't go beyond that. But we also see in Christ the Father's heart.

You know, friends, it is good to find warmth in a Christian. The longer I go on as a believer and the longer I go on in the ministry, the more I appreciate practical Christianity.

So very well to learn things off by heart. So very well to be technical correct with everything. But if we lack warmth, if we lack love, if we lack compassion, what have we?

Where do people see us in any way like the Redeemer? Surely it is in our life. After all, how can we prove to anyone that we are forgiven?

[27 : 08] Forgiveness is an invisible thing in itself. And it only becomes visible by the life we live, by their fruits, ye shall know them.

love. When we look at the Redeemer, when we look at the compassion he showed there towards the leper, the compassion he showed towards the blind, the lame, the dumb, towards the bereaved, towards the hungry, there we see the heart of God.

He that has seen me has seen my father also. love. And we find, friends, in the original that there is a word there for compassion applied to Christ and it is applied nowhere else.

It works the synoptic gospels and it appears nowhere else but in three parables. The parable of the master who forgave his servant because he was in debt to him.

and the compassion the father showed there to the prodigal when he returned home and the compassion the good Samaritan showed.

[28 : 22] Other than these three examples, it is always use of Christ and it means a depth of compassion unknown to us.

Surely, friends, only in the Savior could be looked for such a fountain. Such a fountain. And so the compassion is shown there in healing the sick.

There we see a glimpse of the father's heart. But then the compassion that God had on you and on me through Christ, we see there also the father's heart.

How gracious God is. how tender the Savior is. The time is marching on. We also see in the sun the wisdom of God.

Ah, but we never saw it till grace touched our hearts. grace. To the Jews, remember, he was astounding God.

[29 : 37] To the Greeks, he was foolishness. But to those that believe, both Jews and Greeks, he is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

God. And when grace touched your heart and my heart, he was no longer like a root of the dry ground, having no form or comeliness.

When we realized we were sinners and we saw the sinfulness of our sins, there was only but one relevant person in this whole universe, as far as we were concerned, the great physician.

no one else could help. And so, by grace, we have seen it as the wisdom of God.

Now, friends, before I leave this point, I'd like just to mention this. There is no doubt that there's a lot said about the love of God in many pulpits throughout the length and breadth of the UK and far beyond.

[30 : 45] But the sad thing is this, that the love of God is emphasized and interpreted to the exclusion of his justice and his holiness.

To many, pardon of sin is nothing more than turning a blind eye to people's sins, faults, and failings.

That is not what pardon is. when God pardons sin, he does no violation to his justice and holiness, because the sins he pardons have already been punished in the passion of the mediator.

God, and we're going to deal with the love of God. It must be kept in his context, it must be kept in balance. And before God could show compassion on anyone, first, his justice had to be satisfied, his public honor restored, sin had to be atoned for.

And what encouragement there for a sinner. Anyone in our midst this evening who has not yet closed in with Christ. If you are seeking pardon from the very depth of your being, remember this friends.

[32 : 10] That God is a compassionate God who delights in mercy and who will never turn away anyone who in all sincerity seeks forgiveness.

Thirdly then, let us look at the vision spoken of here, its nature and some of its concomitants. Now, the apostles, they had immediate access to Christ.

John tells us in the epistle that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes and which we have handled of the word of life.

They saw, they heard them, they touched them. Now, we have a saying that seeing is believing. But it wasn't so when Christ sent the Messiah.

They didn't receive him as the Messiah because they saw him and heard him and touched him. They received him as the Messiah through grace, through saving grace.

[33 : 23] Remember there were thousands in the days of Christ who saw him, who had all the possible evidences of his Messiahship.

And yet, who died in ignorance. So, grace is what made the distinction between the apostles and other true followers and the masses who saw him with their eyes.

Now, you know yourselves that there is a difference between vision and faith. And yet, in another sense, they have got a lot in common.

Faith is the evidence of things not seen. Isn't that tremendous? It is the evidence of things not seen.

And the object of faith. Take the Redeemer himself. The object of faith is as real to the believer as an object is to the eye which we know to be what it is.

[34 : 39] Remember Paul, what he had to say. I know, he said, whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

I know. And then elsewhere he says, I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, O Lord.

And there is a belief in our midst saying, ah, but that was more than faith. That was assurance as well. Yes, there is no doubt.

Paul was perfectly assured of his salvation. There is no doubt about that. But remember this, friends. That the faith which the father exercised when he brought his son to Christ, and he made the admission himself, I believe, Lord, help thou mine unbelief.

Remember, that faith justifies the sinner, just the same, as the faith that Abraham exercised or David or Paul.

[36 : 02] Why? Because the faith that justifies is the gift of God. It's the gift of God. And even if it is weak, it is still of the same essence as the strong faith.

So it's the essence we have to look at. Whoever decidable strong faith is, it's the essence of that faith we have to look at in terms of justification.

When God there justifies a sinner, that sinner is regarded as legally righteous, not morally righteous, remember.

It doesn't belong to the area of justification to make a person morally righteous. That belongs to sanctification.

And the spirit, of course, is the sanctifier. And he employs the word, the sacraments, providence, afflictions, fellowship, and so forth.

[37 : 08] So you've got to keep these two things apart. There's a connection, of course, but they must be kept apart. And my reason for raising the point is this, that too often Christians are maybe, and when I use Christian, I mean it in the true sense of the word one born of the spirit.

They are troubled by the fact that they find so many sins in their hearts. And they ask themselves the question, well, should I have these sins if I am a justified person?

Well, let's turn it another way. It would be most alarming if you lost sight of your sins. Because in an unregenerate state, sin doesn't trouble us.

But when we are justified, sin does trouble us. And then secondly, friends, you don't just look at sin and mourn over sin.

You do something about it, something positive about it. And what is that? You mortify sin and mortification is through the spirit, and it goes on throughout the lifetime of a person.

[38 : 16] It never ends. Being morally righteous, well, that belongs to the ear of the Holy Spirit, and in that matter we concur ourselves.

And God will take care of that. The day will come when, of course, the person will be made perfect at death and will immediately enter into glory. There's another thing that sometimes people are confused about, and that is this.

They think that when they are brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, that they change constitutionally. Remember, friends, that although we are a new creation in Christ Jesus, it doesn't follow.

If you are an impatient person by nature, if you are an arrogant person by nature, if you are a tight-fisted person by nature, if you are a person full of ambition and self-confidence by nature, I'm only just mentioning some examples, that all these things are going to vanish and they're never going to trouble you again.

No. Even though they are not your own appetites, they're not going to vanish and they're never going to trouble us again. The difference is this, that they are kept in their place by the grace of God.

[39 : 35] And the grace of God will enable the impatient person to cultivate patience. The tight-fisted person to become hospitable and charitable.

The arrogant person to be more subdued. The ambitious and self-confident to depend more wholly upon the Lord.

And that will go on, friends, throughout our pilgrimage here below. But, as we're being sanctified, we are also being transformed into the likeness of the Redeemer.

So, friends, don't be troubled about these things. And there are times when the weakness of the flesh can exert themselves to such an extent that one can question if there is grace there.

Take, for example, two Christians who, of course, become involved in strike. Let's say that they have exchanged words over something and then one thing has led to another.

[40 : 46] And then there is an acrimonious exchange of words. And then, of course, relationship between the two are sour. You know, in some cases, you would think that there was no grace left in these people.

But, you see, where there is grace, the natural disposition of the soul is Godward. And even although these people have backslidden and so forth, yet God brings them back again.

And the natural disposition of the regenerated soul is toward God. Toward God, friends. And it must come back towards God again. So, there is need always to be vigilant.

There is need always to crucify the flesh. There is need always to look to him who alone can uphold us and bless us. And now, as you know yourselves, saving grace is never alone, cannot be alone.

You can't have repentance without faith. Faith accompanies repentance. And we also find that love is a companion of faith.

[41 : 57] Love. And do you find the love of God in your heart this evening? And if we love God, then, of course, we will love the things pertaining to God.

We will love the provision God has made. His word, it should be precious to us. His people should be precious to us.

His day should be precious to us. And even his chastisements should be precious to us. Maybe initially we rebel against them. But if we have grace, we will eventually kiss the hand that chastened us.

And I think this is also true of the believer. The longer he goes on in the faith, the more precious the blessed Redeemer becomes to him.

More precious. When you look at people living solely for this world, their heart in everything they do, as if there was nothing beyond this life.

[43 : 08] We have to be very diligent as stewards of the many things God has given us. We have to be very diligent and we have to be very astute in our affairs and all these things.

But it is something else to live wholly for the things, the fleeting things of this world. And you know yourselves that even the most pleasant things of this life are very evanescent.

They soon fade away. And you are here this evening, maybe you've been striving after this goal and that goal and that other goal. But the problem is, having achieved your goal, the joy is of a diminishing nature.

After a while, you get no thrill from it. And then you aim at another goal and after a while, of course, it turns sour. And you go on and on and on like that.

Well, friends, there is no rest for your soul until you come to Christ. And when you come to Christ, you will dare drink your fill and be satisfied.

[44 : 17] I trust that God has blessed something of what was said to you. Let us pray. O Lord, forgive us where we have erred.

Honor and glorify thy name. Take us to our homes in safety. And wash us from our sins. For Christ's sake. Amen. Let us conclude now singing to God's praise in Psalm 45, the first version of the Psalm, verses 10 to 15 to the tune Arnold.

O daughter, hearken unto God, and do thy near incline. Likewise, forget thy father's house and people that are dying. Then of the king the third shall be thy beauty vehemently.

Because he is thy Lord, do thou him worship reverently. ■■■ge of God. Yes. Oh. Xen. IV.

But you still find your cardror, I will go ■■■ day in night Oh you