

John 74 – Show Us the Father**01/11/2026****Scripture 1: (Jn. 14:7-14 ESV)**

If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

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'? 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. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

"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.

Sermon:

Continuing onward from Jesus exclusively claiming, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*” (Jn. 14:6 ESV), John resumes with Jesus concluding, “*If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.*”. However, the sense of knowing and seeing which Jesus uses here, has less to do with our visual sight and more to do with representation; with Jesus being the “image” or emissary of His Father, the Great King, and the further consequences of our being representations of Jesus.

During this final conversation and teaching moment with His disciples, Jesus asserted His unity and union with God the Father by saying, “*Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.*” (Jn. 13:31-32 ESV). He next asserted His equality with the Father, as God and the rightful object of our faith saying, “*Believe in God; believe also in me.*” (Jn. 14:1 ESV). Then Jesus proclaimed Himself as the unique and only “way”: the sole mediator between God and man, and the only means to access the beneficent presence of God the Father. Now, Jesus combines these three aspects in a manner that preserves the distinctiveness of their divine Person-hood, asserting His possession of the closest possible similarity (an almost “same-ness”) with the Father; defining Himself as the true and perfect “image” of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). Similarly, we should recall that Adam originally, and therefore all humanity, was created as the “*image of God*” (Genesis 1:26-27); possessing the “likeness” of God for the purpose of serving as His representative before creation. However, this claim by Jesus greatly exceeds the original implication of Adam's scope.

Now it was Philip's turn to question Jesus, reminding us that a lack of full understanding or comprehension was not merely limited to Peter or Thomas, but to all eleven of the disciples. “*Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."*”. However, Philip's question is more strange, at its core, than it otherwise seems to us, as 21st Century Christians; him asking Jesus, “*...show us the Father...*”.

Generally speaking, the questions which people ask communicate far more than a simple request for information. Our questions also communicate information about what we already understand or assume. If I asked someone, “Where are you going for New Year's Eve?”, beyond that simple question, I would be conveying certain underlying assumptions (assumptions that I might not be even aware of making), such as:

- I am assuming that the person should be going out or, that I expect them to go out on New Year's Eve.
- I am assuming that the person will be “going out” rather than “staying in” or hosting their own party.
- I am assuming that the person will be out “late”, at least “later than normal”, since “going out” on New Year's Eve is generally associated with parties and late night festivities.

Whereas, if I was not making these assumptions, then obviously, there would be no reason to ask the question.

What “unspoken” assumptions were being communicated by Philip through his question?

- First, the question itself suggests that Philip was assuming that it was somehow possible to be shown God, the Father.
- Second, he also apparently assumed and believed that Jesus could show the Father to them.
- Third, Philip assumed that if they were shown, then their curiosity and desire for greater understanding would be satisfied, since “*seeing is believing*”.

However, there are other, more relevant and more subtle assumptions which were being made that suggests some other important background information that we are missing.

Remember Philip, just like all of Jesus' faithful eleven, was a Jewish man. Jews know and understand that God cannot rightly be "seen". The Second Commandment decrees, "*You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God...*" (Exod. 20:4-5 ESV). Meanwhile Christians, we understand this commandment to prohibit, as the Westminster Larger Catechism #109 teaches "Q. 109. *What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?* A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.". Thus, together with Jews, we share a united understanding and interpretation that we cannot "see" God, in the flesh of this present, earthly life.

- So, we may reasonably expect that Philip understood that the massive curtain in the Temple, separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, protected the priests and prevented them from accidentally "seeing God" and also, that when the High Priest went inside on the Day of Atonement, he surrounded himself with a cloud of incense so that he would not "see God" and die (Leviticus 16:12-13).
- Surely he understood that when Moses, the Servant of the LORD (Deuteronomy 34:5), spoke with God "*face to face*" (Exodus 33:1) in the "Tent of Meeting", causing his face to glow afterwards as a reflection of God's glory (Exodus 34:35), Moses did not actually "see God", but a theophany: a divine representation that conveyed the sense of God's presence without containing or portraying the substance of God. {Even when Moses asked to see God's glory, he was only shown the LORD's back (or hindquarters) and even then, Moses was covered by God's hand, obscuring his view.}

Obviously Philip "knew", based upon Scripture as well as by all of the practice of the Jews, that God could not be shown to or be seen by mortals. It was impossible and beyond miraculous. So, Philip had either experienced a drastic change in his understanding about the nature and character of God or, he still was not understanding that "the Father" whom Jesus kept talking about is the LORD God (although, I sincerely doubt that Philip would have been thinking about Joseph).

But what was Philip really asking Jesus? Was he perhaps saying, "Jesus, You keep making these outrageous and unbelievable claims about being God, so prove it! *Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.*"?

I suspect maybe, or something near to that effect, because after all, that has been the point which John has been constantly making across his Gospel; demonstrating how Jesus claimed to be God (saying "I AM") and proved His claim as fact (by His miraculous Signs). I am thinking this because of how Jesus responded to Philip. Jesus answered him with rhetorical incredulity, "*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'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?*", essentially retorting, "Even after everything I have done, after all that you have seen and heard, you still do not believe me?".

But, although we believe it now, having been mercifully given eyes of faith, we should try to be more sympathetic to the disciples since, while they personally witnessed and saw these miracles that we believe by hearing (Romans 10:17), at that moment in time, the disciples were probably not yet regenerate; although we cannot really say. Although we know and we are certain that they did not come into their fullness of understanding until after they had received the Holy Spirit, their *parakaleo*, whom Jesus would soon be sending

to remind them and explain to them “all things” (John 14:26). So, we should not hold them at fault for them still misunderstanding. We be more charitable towards them.

Meanwhile, Jews have always understood that, while they could not “see God”, every human person is created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). The 11th Century Jewish Rabbi, commonly known as Rashi¹ (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac), whose commentary on the Hebrew Scriptures and the Babylonian Talmud is used as the modern Jewish standard, wrote that when Moses wrote, “*And God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness.”* and “*And God created humankind in the divine image, creating it in the image of God—creating them male and female.*” in Genesis 1:26-27²; that “image” was something related to “type” or kind, that “likeness” related to “the power to comprehend and to discern”, and that the “image of God” was related to “the form of the image of his Creator”. The Hebrew term *tselem*, translated there as “image”, ordinarily carries a sense of “representation” {Numbers 33:52 uses it to describe pagan idols as representations of their gods (see also: 2 Kings 11:18, Ezekiel 7:20, 23:14, Amos 5:26); 1 Samuel 6:5, 11 uses it to describe the golden representations of mice and tumors crafted by the Philistines as their offering of repentance}; describing something that “stands in the place of” something else. Holding this understanding of image as a “type” and with Adam, along with all humanity, possessing this type, we understand {from that unique Scriptural context} that Adam/humanity is intended to represent God to His creation. The “type” that humanity shares with the LORD, concerns our status as governors ruling with His delegated authority, which is why authority is the primary concern of Jesus's divinity claim that His miraculous signs addressed. That was why Jesus answered the question of authority, saying, “*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 is why Jesus' claim upon His status as “image-bearer” transcends Adam's, because He claims to not merely represent that Father, but that the works He has done, He has done as the Father's works. It is not representative, but actual. They were not done just in the Father's Name, or for the Father's glory, but done as for God, by God.

Next, Jesus told them, “*Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.*”. He gave them a choice: to either believe in Him, to trust in Him and His Word because it has the inherent authority of the divine or, to believe in Him because of the divinely miraculous works that He had done, that were being done through Him. We should rightly believe Him simply because “He says to”, because He has divine authority; but, if that is not enough for us, then we can believe in Him because of the evidence; because of all the wonders that He has wrought; because of the proof of His divinity that He has provided. So, while we should just take Jesus's Word for it, there is also evidence supporting His Word which helps us to more easily believe it.

Then, while offering yet another description of His unity and equality with God the Father, Jesus makes two statements that sound like a logical contradiction but are not: “*I am in the Father*” and “*the Father is in me*”.

The logical “Law of Non-Contradiction” teaches that two “...contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same context.³”, while RC Sproul used to explain it as⁴, “A cannot be both A and non-A at the same time and in the same relationship.”. Disregarding the physical fact that a person cannot wholly be inside of another person after their birth. Logically, one thing cannot be inside of a second thing while the second thing is also inside of the first thing. Logically, both of those statements cannot be technically true at the same time, unless their relationship is different somehow. An example would be:

- I am a son and I am a husband.

1 <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/who-was-rashi/>

2 <https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.1.27?lang=bi&with=Rashi&lang2=en>

3 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/psychology/law-of-noncontradiction>

4 <https://learn.ligonier.org/series/defending-your-faith/law-of-contradiction>

I am the son of my mother and I am also the husband of my wife. Either way, I remain myself without contradiction because my status as a son or as a husband is dependent on the person with whom I'm in the relationship. I cannot be my mother's husband and I cannot be my wife's son. Those would be contradictions morally, biblically, and legally since those are forbidden and impossible relationships.

Now, we say that Jesus is the perfect and true image of God, not simply because He is “representative” of God, but because He is God; God incarnate, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*; He is “*in the Father*” and “*the Father is in Him*”.

- Jesus is fully human (100%), possessing the same “image of God” as Adam, and Jesus is also fully God (100%), making Him 100% of 200%.
- However, the “type” of Christ's authority is different from Adam's type. Jesus' authority transcends Adam's because His authority is not delegated authority, since it is the inherent authority of the Father. Adam's authority was derived from God the Father while Jesus' authority is God the Father's authority.
 - The great difference is, the rule and dominion of Adam remains subject to God's authoritative Word, to God's Holy Law, and may be rebuked, overridden, and receive retribution for injustice (see the many “oracles of woe” proclaimed by the Prophets against the nations, including against Israel and Judah) whereas, while technically subordinate to the Father (in the sense of being begotten and in a relational sense), the Son is functionally equal to the Father, as God and possessing God's “likeness”, and because the Father has given Him “*All authority in heaven and on earth...*” (Matthew 28:18). Therefore, the rule and dominion of the Son is absolute and ultimately sovereign, the same as the Father's.
- Furthermore, possessing God's “likeness”, Jesus has the same comprehension and discernment as the Father: the same knowledge, wisdom, understanding and the same will as the LORD God.
- Taken together, this all means that Jesus the man, possessed the “*image of God*” like Adam (similar to but not the same as Adam), because He is the form and image of the Creator, Himself; since Christ is the eternal “type”. Adam was a “type” of Christ, like Christ; an “ante-type” foreshadowing and pointing towards Christ.

Therefore, we and Adam both possess the “*image of God*”, that makes us to be like God and also therefore, like Christ. Since God the Son and God the Father are so perfectly united and equal in their union that they are said to be “*in*” one another, then through our Christian union into Christ Jesus, we also may say that “We are in Christ, just as Christ is in us.”.

Normally, when Christians say that we are “*in Christ*”, talking about our union with and “*into*” Him (Romans 6:5), we are referring to our being “clothed” or “covered” with the righteousness of Christ (Isaiah 61:10) in relation to our being justified before God the Father. We believe that we are so united “*into*” Christ that the LORD sees only Jesus and His holy righteousness and not our sinful wickedness. We believe that because we are both “*in Christ*” and “*Christ is in us*”, that when God sees us, He sees us as Jesus; He sees us as He sees His beloved Son. Not only that, we also believe that because we are so united in Christ, then when the world sees us and the good works of love that we do in Jesus' Name, for God's glory, that the world sees Jesus through us, and the LORD God through Him. We believe that when the LORD shall look upon us on the day of judgment, He will look at us and see Jesus and, we believe that when the world (when the Devil) looks at us in our present and sees the obedient way we live and the way we love one another, for Christ and His glory; Satan looks upon us and sees Jesus and the LORD God, our Father in heaven, through us.

- So, the proper answer to Philip's request, to show him the Father, was for him to see Jesus as who He really is.

- So, if you want to “see” God and if you want to “see” Jesus, then the way that you may do so is to “see” a Christian.

Considering His argument/explanation across this whole conversation, Jesus was explaining that:

- If someone knows (*ginosko*) Christ: if someone understands both who Jesus is **and** is in a loving, submissive and obedient relationship with Him as their Lord (and their Savior); then, they also “know” the Father.
- If someone knows Christ in this manner, then they also will have “seen” (*orao*) the Father. They have not “seen” Him in the physical sense of vision (via the electromagnetic spectrum), but in the perceptive sense of recognition and understanding, and in the experiential sense of a personal relationship.
- If someone sees Christ in this way: perceiving, recognizing, understanding and therefore, believing in Him (having *pisteo* in Him); experiencing a relationship of faith with Him, through the ordinary means of grace: through the reading and hearing of Scripture, by prayer, by trust and reliance, and by loving obedience and service to others; then likewise, they also are “seeing” God the Father.

If a Christian is faithfully following and obeying Christ: by loving others as He has first loved us (John 13:34-35); then, seeing them, you will be seeing Christ in them and you will be seeing them do the works of God for the purpose of His eternal glory. By seeing Christians, by watching us and seeing how we live, our lives should be confirming and supporting the truth of Jesus Christ: of His life and His way; encouraging and inviting the world to believe and to have faith in Jesus; to believe His Word contained in Scripture, and to believe because of the works we do in His Name and for God's glory.

That is why Jesus concludes this section saying, “*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. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.*”. Jesus told His disciples, “You ain't seen nothing yet! If you thought the things I have done were amazing, just wait until you see the things that you shall do in my Name.”. But, did they? Do we do the same or even greater works than Jesus Christ?

Let me be crystal clear. When Jesus said, “... *whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do...*”, He was **not** saying that later Christians would do miracles or perform similar signs and wonders. The miraculous works that Jesus did were never meant as specific examples of our potential works. The miraculous works of Christ were individually unique and specific to the person or persons who benefited from them and that distinct situation or circumstance.

Rather, Jesus' miraculous works were instances of divine evidence confirming who Jesus is and the Gospel message He proclaimed, the same as how the miracles performed by Moses confirmed his status as the LORD's messenger and the Law he brought or, just as the miracles which were performed by Elijah and Elisha affirmed their prophetic ministries. Meanwhile, Moses' successors, beginning with Joshua, had no need for doing miracles because they did not bring the same kind of special revelation; and likewise, while Elisha's ministry was a necessary continuation of Elijah's, their successors the “*sons of the prophets*” (2 Kings 2:15) and the later prophets of Scripture did not need to do miraculous signs or wonders because the eventual fulfillment of prophecy was their affirmation. Similarly, the more limited miracles of the Apostles confirmed them as the messengers of Christ, affirmed the truth of the Gospel they proclaimed, and since the canon has been closed we have had no need for further revelation, until Christ's final appearing. So, we also have no need for such signs.

Instead, the miraculous works of Christ were typological examples for us to follow and improve upon.

- Jesus gave sight to the blind, made the sick healthy, and restored wholeness to those who were lame or broken. Similarly, we should be tending the sick and injured; caring for them until they are healed and whole, as we are each able.
- Jesus fed the hungry multitudes. Similarly, we should care for those in need by feeding and clothing those who hunger, thirst, or are “naked”, as we are each able.
- Jesus saw value and dignity in those who were marginalized and oppressed. Similarly, we should work for justice among all people, for reconciliation and peace between erstwhile foes. We should promote positive mental health, encourage the improvement of self-esteem and self-worth because every human person has value, since they also possess the image of God.

While we cannot do such things by the power of a “word of command” or by waving our hands and snapping our fingers, as Christians, we may/should/must do such works as Christ did in obedience and love, as *agape*. Jesus lived on earth for a relatively short time, thirty-ish years, living in the small region of Judea; while each Christian has their whole life to live in loving service, and Christians live everywhere across the world. Our immediate capability, capacity, and reach to love is both broader and deeper than what Jesus experienced during the 1st Century; therefore, we can do the same works like Christ, yet they become far greater when we do them for the right reason, empowered by His Spirit: in love of them, out of love for Christ, for the glory and honor of God our Father in heaven. Christians do such works so that everyone will see, so that our fellow Christians and all the world will see Jesus Christ in us, and also see that the Son is in the Father, just as the Father is in the Son, and therefore, give Him all of the glory, praise, and thanksgiving.

So, in that sense, we can be shown the Father just as the disciples were shown. Ultimately, Jesus' answer to Philip's question, was His explanation that by seeing Him: that by experiencing Jesus and His *agape*; they were also seeing and experiencing God the Father and His love.

Again, Jesus' argument supports and builds upon His claim of divinity; of union and equality with the LORD, as God. Being “*in the Father*” and having “*the Father in [Him]*”,

- Jesus' spoken word, everything that He taught and said, were spoken as God's Words, with the full authority of the LORD.
- Jesus' actions, everything that He did, all of His miracles, were done as God's activity proving that He has the full authority of the LORD.
- All of the glory that Jesus received from men: all of the gratitude and appreciation He received for His merciful works; was received through Him, as glory given for the LORD.
- All of the reproach that Jesus received from men: all of the anger, animosity, antagonism, hatred, and fear; was received through Him, as their sinful reproach against the LORD.
- Similarly, because of our union into Christ, when Christians are recognized, praised, or honored for the good works of love, charity, and mercy we do in the Name of Christ (such as with hospitals and schools, or disaster relief and prison ministry), then God our Father is being glorified.
- Likewise, when Christians are reviled and persecuted; discriminated against or marginalized; attacked, hurt or murdered on account of our earnest, uncompromising faith and confidence in Jesus Christ and the promises of God (Matthew 5:11-12), then we know that it is God our Father who is truly being abused, mistreated, and rejected.

Once we truly begin to understand this aspect of Jesus Christ, about Him being God's perfect image and we as images of Him then, not only should we have an even greater sense of awe and appreciation, it should also be mixed with shock and horror.

- We should be even more grateful, perceiving the depth of God's condescension by coming to earth: the only holy God becoming incarnate to live among wicked and wretched sinners, in order to love us by living, dying, and rising again for us.
- We should feel more self conscious about humanity's sinful reaction and response to the gracious mercy found in God's condescension: how we (collectively as a race) despised Him, ignored Him, rejected Him, plotted and conspired against Him, mocked Him, tortured and mutilated Him, and ultimately unjustly murdered Him. We should also feel self conscious about ourselves, since we did all of the same (and worse) while we were yet unregenerate, before we were saved.
- Nevertheless, this should lead us to feel a even greater response of love for God, because of this, His infinitely greater love for us: as demonstrated through the grace of His merciful forgiveness for inflicting all that upon Him and His willingness to subject Himself to our abuse while also taking the fullness of God's just wrath upon Himself, the wrath which we each deserve for our sins, (including the Father's righteous wrath for the abuse that was being inflicted upon the Son, at that moment in time).

So, turn to your left and then to your right. Look upon the neighbor who is sitting there, next to you. Ask yourself, do you see the image of God within them? Do you see Christ in them and, through them, do you see God your Father? I hope and pray that you can. More importantly, consider for yourself, yourself, because they are also presently looking to and into you.

- Are you showing them the light and love of our Father in heaven, or are you showing forth the darkness of a father who is dwelling somewhere far lower?
- Are you showing Jesus Christ to them? How well are you? Please, be honest with yourself.

What can you do to better show forth Christ within you? How might you better help His light to shine? No matter how good we think we are and no matter how well we think we are doing, we all have room to improve. We are all waiting to be perfected in glory, but the Holy Spirit has been given to you to be perfecting you now. So, let Him and help Him. Work with Him and do not work to hinder Him. Do what is right and good and loving so that when someone asks you, "Show me Christ." or "Show me the evidence of your faith.", then you may truthfully and confidently answer them, "Whoever sees me, sees Jesus and God, our Father."

AMEN