

# Certainty for the future

## Questions

### Way in

If a friend were to say to you: "I like the idea of going to Church and getting involved now, but I just can't understand what heaven is all about." What might you say to them? Why do we find it difficult to believe in the reality of heaven?

### Read **John 14:1-14**

*To understand this passage properly we have to see what was in the minds of the disciples. Jesus had just made it clear to them that he was going to be leaving them very soon. Understandably they are confused and troubled.*

1. In verses 1-4 Jesus gives five reasons not to be worried about the future. What would they have meant to the disciples, and how do they help us today?
2. Thomas voices his confusion in verse 5. And it's not surprising because he hasn't fully understood who Jesus is and what he has come to do. What claims does Jesus make in verses 6 and 7?
3. Some people find these claims full of reassurance and hope, while others find them arrogant and untrue. What do you think about them? Why do you think Jesus is uniquely able to make these claims?

4. If someone were to say to you 'all religions are basically the same – they are like different roads leading up a mountain', how might you answer them?

5. What has Philip failed to see (verse 8)? What reasons does Jesus give for trusting that if we have seen him, or read about him, we have seen and know the Father?

6. As well as looking back at Jesus we can gain assurance as we get stuck into Christian work. How do you think the amazing promises of verses 12-14 might work out in our lives today?

## Quote for **Reflection**

*"Pray daily for a great outpouring of the Spirit on the Church and on the world. This is the grand need of the day - it is the thing that we need far more than money, machinery, and people. The "company of preachers" in the church is far greater than it was in the days of Paul; but the actual spiritual work done in the earth, in proportion to the means used, is undoubtedly far less. We need more of the presence of the Holy Spirit - more in the pulpit, and more in the congregation - more in the pastoral visit, and more in the school. Where He is, there will be life, health, growth, and fruitfulness. Where He is not - all will be dead, tame, formal, sleepy, and cold. Then let everyone who desires to see an increase of pure and undefiled religion, pray daily for more of the presence of the Holy Spirit in every branch of the visible Church of Christ." (J.C. Ryle)*

Take some time to pray for this as we begin this series together.

# Counterfeit Faith Questions

## Way in

As you think over your life so far, which people have had the greatest positive impact on your faith? What is it about their life that has impressed you so much?

Have there been any times in your life in which Jesus has meant so much to you that the things of this world have seemed so unimportant in comparison? What was it about Christ that prompted such a reaction?

## Read **Philippians 3:1-3**

1. In verse 1, Paul reminds these Christians that he is writing for their own safety. Are there any aspects of the gospel that we might have forgotten but need to be reminded of for our own safeguarding?

2. Paul seems quite worked up in verse 2. Why do you think he writes what he does?

3. What is it about going back to the custom of circumcision for these Gentile Christians that so upsets Paul? How might circumcision have seemed so attractive to them? Are you able to think of any 21st Century equivalents? How else are we tempted to turn away from the extravagant grace of Jesus?

4. In verse 3, what are the characteristics of genuine faith? What do these look like in 21st Century life?

5. It is so liberating to know that we 'worship by the Spirit of God' (v3). What difference might this make to our daily lives and to our worship together at church?

6. Which is easier, to be confident in your own actions and living ('confident in the flesh', v3), or to be confident in the death & resurrection of Jesus ('glory in Christ Jesus', v3)? Which is more common in your life, and how can we spur each other on to glory only in Christ?

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