

Why Say Goodbye?

It's hard to say goodbye. My wife has a term "**Midwest goodbye**". That's when the guest says goodbye **in the living room**, but the conversation continues. Then they say goodbye in the **foyer**, but the conversation continues. Then they say goodbye on **the front porch**, but the conversation continues. And finally, they say goodbye **in the driveway** with the conversation continuing **until the car starts backing** into the street. That's a difficult goodbye.

We come up with other ways of saying it so that it doesn't sound so scary. You can say, "**see you later/soon**," that is like "**until next time**". These two ways don't sound as ominous or permanent. "**Catch you later**" **sounds so casual and relaxed** that it isn't scary. Or completely leave English and say, "**Adios**" or "**Al vita Zane**". In a foreign tongue it sounds less harsh.

Obviously, **the goodbyes that are the most difficult** are the ones that are at the beginning of a **long separation** from someone you really love. That separation could be for **the rest of your life in the case of the death** of a loved one. Our **kids going off to college** and the **military** were harder because it is longer, and **you aren't there to play the same role** that you have played to this point in their lives.

When I moved to Los Angeles and then, decades later, when **my son Josiah moved there**. Those kinds of "goodbyes" **create stress and tension as they get closer**. That leads to **fear of the unknown**.

But these can also produce energy and excitement which is the opposite to the fear of the unknown. **This is excitement about the potential** in this life change.

When you say those kinds of goodbyes there's weight to it. It's not like saying goodbye to your **spouse on the way to work**. There is no expectation that this word in this context means much.

John in the 14th chapter of his gospel records what is called a "farewell discourse". It sounds a bit like a **Midwest goodbye**. It's filled with **encouragement**. It's long enough to **have taken place at different points in Jesus walking out the door**. What makes this big for the people involved is that **Jesus is communicating this to his closest followers**.

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ²There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going."

⁵"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "**We have no idea where you are going**, so how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

⁸Philip said, "Lord, **show us the Father**, and we will be satisfied."

⁹ Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. ¹¹ Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

¹² “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it! John 14:1-14

It’s easy to see that they are confused. They don’t know **where he is going**, and they want to see the father. **That means they don’t really understand who Jesus is. They are probably thinking...Why say goodbye?**

In these verses, Jesus is letting them know **why, after a short time** and that **nothing has been established**, yet he is going to leave. **They think things are just starting to pick up momentum.** Jesus has **raised his friend, Lazarus**, from the grave and **has entered Jerusalem during Passover time** to crowds cheering him like a conquering king returning home.

Jesus, why say goodbye now? Because **I must go** to prepare for you to follow.

Jesus has things that need to be done that they don’t know about yet. But also, he needs to make it clear to them **how** they can follow him. **It’s a threefold issue, where are you going, why are you going, and how can I find you later?** This is **reflected in the question** they pose to Jesus as he says goodbye.

Look at verses 2 and 3 again because he makes it clear that he’s got things to do before they come... **There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.** John 14:2-3

He’s going to be with the father and there are **preparations** to be made before they come. Then he **promises** to let them know when that time comes.

Jesus also deals with the question of how they are to get there. He is giving them a map of sorts. To the statement from Thomas, **“We have no idea where you are going**, so how can we know the way?... **Jesus says this.** But you **have to look at me** when I read it.

⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the way (Jesus points at his chest), the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!” John 14:6-7

He is the only path back to what he has prepared for them. In other words, **watch what I am going to do in the next week, and you will see that I am leading you.** I am the **map**. There will be **plenty of reasons to run, hide, give up**, but trust me and don’t be afraid. **I’m THE way not a way. There is only one path and it’s me. I’m not just the preferred destination, I’m the path to get there.**

He doesn't show us the way, he is the way. **The way to what? Seeing the father and being in relationship to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

"The implication behind the reproachful question (of Phillip) is that all fellowship with Jesus loses its significance unless he is recognized as the **one whose sole intention is to reveal God, and not to be anything for himself**; but it **also implies that the possibility of seeing God is inherent in the fellowship with Jesus**. What need is there for anything further." *NIV App.* 408, Rudolf Bultmann, *John*.

In a pluralistic society this sounds almost stupid. It can be called **bigoted, intolerant**. I think the commentator, Gary M. Burge, from the NIV application Commentary on John puts it.

"Therefore the exclusive claim of Christianity about Christ is not centered on our belief that Jesus was right about God. **(Just let this settle in before I continue)** It is centered on our claim that God was fully present in Christ to reconcile the world to himself...Jesus 'way' is not superior because it promotes a higher ethic or because it champions values that resonate with our spiritual sensitivities. Jesus' way is true because in him we find God drawing us to himself." 408

That is money. If it weren't so long it might make a great **next tattoo**.

Think about this. **Jesus has made the father visible to people. This can't happen.** The creator **God of the universe** is **too vast, too perfect**, too just, for us to understand. The invisible creator, God, who you weren't supposed to **say his name** is now standing in front of us. **Moses couldn't look at him** as he passed behind him on the mountain.

He is the way to eternal communion with the father. Jesus is saying to them, "**watch what I do as I make myself the path for you to be with this pure, holy, just, God, my father.**"

Jesus, why say goodbye? Because **I must go** to prepare for you to follow and...Because **I must go** for greater good to happen.

I can't prepare for your good and the good of others unless I go. It's like a **parent going off to work** when their child wants him or her to stay home. **It's better in the long run** for mom or dad to go to work so they can get paid.

Here's Jesus saying to the kids, "**Daddy's got to go to work now, but I'll be back. You need to trust me when I say, "I will be back after work."**

What do I mean by the greater good? Because Jesus must go so that this promise will come to reality. ¹²"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it! John 14:12-14

It is...Greater because it's done by regular people.

Greater is not in comparison to what Jesus did on the cross or the miraculous things he did during his earthly ministry. It is great because they are done by regular people. **It's unexpected because these things they are going to do will come from fishermen and tax collectors and people from hillBilly backwater Galilee.**

It's greater because what Jesus did is multiplied by the number of followers he has. Jesus, in a human body, **could only be one place** at a time. Sure, he could heal people from a distance, but it was one at a time.

Watch closely to what is about to happen in verse 15ff. ¹⁵“If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Advocate, who will never leave you.** ¹⁷He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. ¹⁹Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. ²⁰When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” John 14:15-21

That Greek word for **never means...never.**

It is...Greater because it's done by regular people...Greater because we get the Holy Spirit.

What is an advocate? The Greek word here literally means, **“one who comes along side.”**

Some people are born with this. I lived with two women who have this. Robin was literally called a **Client Advocate** when she was at Shelter House next door. This is an organization that comes along side people who have been abused by a spouse or partner. Usually, it's women, the physically weaker. She met these women **on their worst day.** She helped them **think properly** about what was happening. She also helped them with **a safe place** in the shelter for her and her kids. Then finally with **resources.** But mostly it was knowing that someone who is **“coming along side me” who can help.**

The other advocate is **Hannah.** If someone was being **picked on or bullied,** she was there. One time this kid was picking on Quinten, and she found out about it. I think she was in 8th and Q was in 6th. She went right up to this boy, looked him in the eye and said, “This stops now.” And it did.

This paraclete or Advocate is like a defense attorney. They come along side someone to make sure **legally their rights are protected,** and they are **innocent until proven guilty.**

Who does it sound like? My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who **pleads our case** before the Father. **He is Jesus Christ,** the one who is truly righteous. ²He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world. 1 John 2:1-2

Yes, Jesus Christ is our advocate, he stands with us in front of a holy, righteous Judge, the Father, and says, “Yes, father, Bill Greiner is a sinner, **but his penalty has been paid, his sentence has been served.**”

In verse **15** it says, **“another advocate who will never leave”.** **Why do we need another one,** was Jesus lacking something? No, he went away so that this **second advocate could be sent on Pentecost** when it fell on the crowd, and everyone heard Peter who was either preaching in Aramaic

or Greek here, then in the native languages. **This means that the second one will continue what Jesus was doing.**

Right on cue Jesus explains. ²⁵I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶But when the Father sends **the Advocate as my representative**—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will **teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.** John 14:25-26

Fear of forgetting what Jesus said, forgetting what his voice sounds like. Forgetting what my **mom's voice, my dad's voice, and Quinten's voice** sounds like.

Jesus, why say goodbye? Because **I must go** to prepare for you to follow and...Because **I must go** for greater good to happen...So that we can be together again in perfect fellowship.

He was preparing a place for this intimate relationship between God and his people to be perfected. As it was intended to be **in the garden.** Intimacy with our heavenly father.

⁹Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? ¹⁰Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. John 14:8-10

This isn't just about Jesus and the father being one, this is about how the father wants to be in relationship with them. He wants to be with them like Jesus was with them.

The fellowship that they are afraid of losing is nothing compared to when they really know him. Not just shadows, spending time with Jesus, but still not really knowing him. **In eternity they will KNOW him.**

“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ²There is more than enough room in my Father's home. John 14:1-2

This is not about the opulence of the house prepared for them. This is a statement about **being together as a family.** Intimacy, not everyone having big rooms with hot tubs and tennis courts. Maybe that's my dream.

This intimacy brings the security that we crave but cannot achieve.

Everyone wants security. Half of the **commercials on TV** are playing on that security. **People work themselves to death** so that they can have security for themselves and for their kids. **And yet, it's not real, it's not eternal.**

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38

Following The Way

Reaffirm that Jesus is your way, your truth, and your life. **Shutting the back door.** This isn't my truth or yours and it's **more than a spiritual experience.** "I can feel him."

There is always someone leaving. That is loss. This life is full of loss. People die, they move, kids grow up. How can we handle all of this "saying goodbye." The Beatles said, "**You say goodbye, but I say hello.**" The world doesn't work like that. This is not dealing with reality.

I have a simple little tool for you to take home and feed on. "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ²There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going."

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Jesus is my way because...

Jesus is my truth because...

Jesus is my life because...