Poulsbo Community Church Dr. Rick Griffith

26 November 2017 Single Message

ESV 40 Minutes

**How to Turn Confusion into Comfort**

Title

***John 14:1-14***

**Topic:** Confusion

**Theme:** How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?

**Thrust:** Trust Jesus to return as the only way to heaven.

**Purpose:** The listeners will find comfort in knowing that Christ is both the way to God and the one coming back for them.

**Video:** VTS\_01\_5.VOB from minute counter 9:46 to 10:38 (= 1:52 minutes) +

**Video:** VTS\_01\_6.VOB from minute counter 00:00 to 2:41 (= 2:41 minutes) = total 4:33

**Song:** About Peace

# Introduction

### Interest: [We all face confusion and discouragement]

#### One reality that we all face in life is separation from those we love. My wife Susan and I have served the Lord in Singapore for 26 years. This has included saying an average of one “goodbye” each year, as we have had about 26 round trips across the Pacific.

Separation

Pacific Map

#### This initially meant we bade farewell to our parents and siblings. Now that our three sons and their wives live in the USA while we continue to serve among the nations in Singapore, these goodbyes are with our sons as well as parents.

Courses

Family

SBC

#### I have taught Bible survey, backgrounds, theology and preaching at Singapore Bible College since 1991, as well as pastoring Crossroads International Church and ministry across 12 other countries in Asia where I train pastors. This involves many “hellos” and “goodbyes” which can bring confusion and discouragement.

Confusion

Asia Map

CIC

#### For some of us, family is often the ***cause*** of confusion rather than the cure. Our expectations might be too high, our family relationships still unresolved, or whatever. We feel confused and discouraged.

Relationships

### Need: Are you confused or discouraged today?

Questions

#### Maybe it has nothing to do with separations from loved ones. Maybe you are disappointed with missed opportunities or with what’s happening at work—not feeling understood, working too many hours, not getting paid decently, or bad decisions where you pay a heavy price.

#### For some of us, discouragement comes when we have prayed and prayed but our prayers don’t seem to go higher than the ceiling.

Confusion

Disapp. w/ God

#### At other times, we’re confused or discouraged and we don’t even know why!

#### In any case, we just know that we need God to fill the void. Wouldn’t it be great to just exchange our confusion and disappointment with Christ’s comfort?

Empty Box

### Subject: But how do you do that? *How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?*

Subject

### Background: In John 1–13 the disciples had seen Jesus do incredible things—

Belief

Blind man

Lazarus

9 Signs

#### They saw him heal the blind and raise the dead as the climax of seven signs—so they placed their trust in him. After John 14, two more signs still lay ahead.

#### But what was the point of all these signs? I used to sum up the Gospel of John with the word “belief” until one day it hit me that the noun “belief” never even appeared in the gospel! In this book the noun “belief” never appears, but the verb forms to “believe” appear 87 times and in nearly every chapter! Thus Lincoln calls this series appropriately “So Believe.”

Judas

So Believe

#### But in chapter 13 in the Upper Room Jesus had just told them that Judas would betray him (13:21), Peter would deny him (13:38), and that he was going away where they couldn’t follow (13:33). They were confused and discouraged!

Peter

Separation

### Text: John 14 records how Jesus comforted them in their confusion and discouragement. They were at the Passover meal in the Upper Room—all seated around a “U-shaped” table—dumbfounded with confusion.

Upper Room

### Preview: They needed to exchange their confusion with Christ's comfort, even as you and I need to do also. Today we’ll see that Jesus gives *two ways to replace confusion with comfort* during times of discouragement.

Subject

2 ways

Seating

### Transition: The first way to turn confusion into comfort is to…

# I. Trust Jesus to return for you (14:1-4).

MP

 [Believe that Christ will come back to bring you to your heavenly home.]

14:1

## Replace your troubled heart with trust in God (14:1).

### Your heart is the center of your personality. You are responsible for the condition of your own heart:

Heart

#### “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding” (Prov. 3:5)

• Prov 3:5

#### “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (Prov. 4:23).

• Prov 4:23

### Christ gives three commands here—one on what not to do (“don’t be troubled”) and two on whom to trust—trust both the Father and the Son.

14:1

(But *how* do you trust God and Jesus? Well…)

## Know that Jesus is preparing heaven until he brings you home at the Rapture (14:2-3).

Mansions

### The KJV says Jesus is preparing “mansions” in the Father’s house, which doesn’t make sense now. A “mansion” simply meant a “dwelling place” then.

### Some say studying what the Bible says about the future is only academic and useless.

### Jesus disagrees. He could have sought to comfort his men in any number of ways during this difficult time, but he decided to tell them about his return.

14:2

### The imagery here is wonderful as in the NT, marriage often depicts Christ’s love for the church. In first century Jewish life, the groom would prepare for his wedding by building an addition onto his father’s house during the yearlong betrothal period. Then, when it was ready, he would leave his father’s home, travel to the bride’s house and bring her back to his father’s home!

Procession

Marriage

### Here is the first time Jesus mentioned this truth to the disciples—that he would leave to prepare heaven for us as his bride, but then return to bring us back to be with him in the Father’s house! In 1 Thess. 4:17 this is called the “catching up,” or “Rapture”!

1 Thess 4

## Jesus declared that they knew the way to heaven (14:4).

14:4

(What a comfort to the troubled disciples—and to us! When I am confused, God is telling me to replace that confusion with the comfort that Jesus will return for me! But Jesus went on to comfort them in a second way where he said to…)

MPI

# II. Trust Christ to bring you to God (14:5-14).

MP

[Believe that Jesus alone can get you to heaven.]

## Jesus is the way to God (14:5-7).

### Verse 6 is one of the most exclusive claims Christ ever made. Is there really only one way to God—and he is that way?

14:6

### Many people have a problem with this statement, thinking it sounds arrogant. One such example is the former pastor but now Buddhist, Dr. Steve McSwain. His website is, of course, SelfGrowth.com, where he writes, “Therefore, I now know that when Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth...no one comes to the Father but by me,’ he was not saying, as Christian history has mistakenly thought, ‘There is no other way to God but by me.’ He was simply saying instead, ‘The way I live is the way to know God—it's also the way to live happily in this world. If you want to know God, follow my way...emulate how I live, how I think, the way I treat myself, others, and the world’" (http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/is-jesus-the-only-way-to-god).

• Quote

McSwain

### So we need only to do good works? No, Jesus was clear and other texts teach the same:

Others

#### The apostle Peter proclaimed to a hostile audience, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

#### The apostle John wrote, "He who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).

#### Again and again, Scripture stresses that Jesus Christ is the only hope of salvation for the world. "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

• 1 Tim 2:5

#### Only Christ can atone for sin, and therefore only Christ can provide salvation. "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11-12).

• 1 Jn 5:11-12

• Acts 4

• Jn 3:36

### Many people today reject this idea of Christ being the only way.

Mountain

#### Some compare it to different paths to scale the same mountain to God.

One Mount

#### Dr. Patrick Swift wrote such a book called *One Mountain, Many Paths.*

#### Oprah defiantly declared, “Jesus Christ can’t be the only way!”

Oprah

### Interesting, isn’t it—people have huge problems with Christ claiming to be the only way to God yet accept a single solution to serious problems in other dimensions—like a one way street.

Sign

#### If you have cancer and a doctor claims that a certain type of chemotherapy is the *only* true way to save your life, he is not deemed arrogant, is he?

#### If you were in a sinking ship and there was only way out, would you argue, “Hey, that’s being a bit exclusive, isn’t it? Who says *your way is* the right way, you narrow-minded idiot?”

#### Lee Strobel addresses three myths about religions today. He writes at his website www.JesusChristOnly.com (<http://www.jesuschristonly.com/sermons/lee-strobel/jesus-the-only-way-to-god.html>), “The third myth is the one that says:

Strobel

##### ***Christians are narrow-minded or snobbish when they say Jesus is the only way to heaven.***

##### Now, I’d agree Christians would be acting in a narrow-minded way if there really were lots of paths to God and they were saying that theirs is the best way. But they’re not saying that.

##### They’re saying that the truth of the matter is that someone has got to pay the penalty for our obvious wrongdoing that keeps us away from God. And Jesus, by virtue of His sinlessness and divinity, is the only one qualified to be our substitute. That’s just the reality of the situation. And it’s not narrow-minded to act upon the evidence and pursue truth.

##### Let me draw you an analogy. I have some friends whose baby girl developed jaundice shortly after birth. Jaundice is a liver disorder that caused her skin and the whites of her eyes to turn yellow. The pediatrician told them that this is a potentially devastating disease but it’s easily treated. All they had to do was put the baby under a special light for a while and this would stimulate her liver properly and she’d be all right.

##### Now, the parents could have said, “That sounds too easy. How about instead if we scrubbed her with soap and dipped her in bleach? If we worked hard enough, I’m sure we could get her normal coloring back.” But the doctor would have said, “No, there’s only one way to handle this.”

##### They could have replied, “**Well, how about if we just sort of ignore this and pretend everything’s OK? You know — the jaundice is your truth, Doc, not our truth. And if we sincerely believe that, things will work out for the best**.” The doctor would have said, “You’d jeopardize your baby if you did that. Look, there’s only one way to cure her. You’re hesitant because it sounds too easy, but look at the credentials hanging on my wall. I’ve studied at medical school and I’ve used what I’ve learned to cure countless babies like yours. Trust me!”

##### Now, would anybody accuse those parents of being narrow-minded if they trusted that doctor and pursued the only course of treatment that was going to cure their little girl? That’s not narrow-minded; that’s acting rationally in accordance with the evidence.

##### Well, we all have a terminal illness called sin, and the reason we cling to Christ is because He’s the Great Physician who has the only cure. We can try to scrub away our sin with good deeds, but it won’t work. We can ignore it and hope it goes away, but it won’t. We can sincerely think there’s another way of dealing with it, but we’d be sincerely wrong. The truth is that only the Great Physician offers a treatment that will erase our stain of sin. When we turn to Him, we’re not being narrow-minded; we’re acting rationally in accordance with the evidence.”

## To know Christ is actually to know the Father (14:8-14).

8-14

### We come to know the Father though Jesus addressing our three key problems: We are lost, so he is the Way; we are deceived, so he is the Truth, and we are spiritually dead, but he is the Life.

Way-Truth-Life

### Isn’t it interesting how many people don’t seem to have a problem with “God,” but when we talk of Jesus, we are met with silence—or indifference—or sometimes it is outright resistance. Truly, the name of Jesus is a showstopper!

### But Jesus clarified that Jesus and the Father (or God) go together. You can’t separate the two. To know Christ is actually to know the Father.

Subject

(How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?)

# Conclusion

### Trust Jesus to return as the only way to heaven (Main Idea).

MI

### You can replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort when you…

####  Trust Jesus to return for you (14:1-4). He’s going to return just like he said.

MPI

####  Trust Christ to bring you to God (14:5-14).

MPII

### Lee Strobel notes, “It’s not snobbish to believe what Jesus taught about being the way to God. Because, frankly, Christianity is anything but snobbish.

#### “Let’s pretend there are *two country clubs*. The first one only admits people who have *earned membership*. To get in, you’ve got to obtain superior wisdom or fulfill a list of demands and fulfill certain spiritual requirements. Despite their best efforts, lots of people just won’t make the grade and will be excluded. Friends, that’s what other religions are saying by teaching that people have to work their way to God.

Clubs

• Earned

#### “But the *second country club* says, ‘Anybody who wants in can come in because *Jesus has already paid for your membership*. Rich or poor, black or white, regardless of your ethnic heritage or where you live, we would love to include you. Entry isn’t based on your qualifications but only on accepting Christ’s invitation. So we’ll leave the matter to you. **You decide. But remember, we will never turn you away if you seek admittance.’**  That’s what Christianity is like.

• Paid

#### “Now, which country club is being snobbish? Christians aren’t putting on airs; we aren’t saying we’re better than anyone else. As one Christian said, ‘We’re just beggars telling other beggars where to find food.’”

### Here are two key questions for you:

#### What confuses you right now? *Family? Job? Future? Relationships?*

Comfort

Confuses

#### Will you accept Christ’s comfort instead? How?

##### Trust Jesus to return for you (14:1-4).

##### Trust Jesus to bring you to God (14:5-14).

Black

### Prayer

# Study Questions (Step 1)

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### In John 13, Christ washed the feet of the disciples and then Jesus had just told them several perplexing things: Judas would betray him (13:21), Peter would deny him (13:38), and that he was going away where they couldn’t follow (13:33).

### They were confused and discouraged!

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### How can we resolve separation anxiety from the One whom we love most? Jesus told them that the separation was only temporary since he would come back (14:1-4), but they knew him and thus would be with him forever (14:5-14).

### A similar scenario applies to us. In our confusion and anxiety, we also must realize that the reality of the Rapture (14:1-4) and salvation in Christ (14:5-14) grant us hope to defeat any despair of this life.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### “The disciples were completely bewildered and discouraged. Jesus had said He was going away (7:34; 8:21; 12:8, 35; 13:33), that He would die (12:32-33), that one of the Twelve was a traitor (13:21), that Peter would disown Him three times (13:38), that Satan was at work against all of them (Luke 22:31-32), and that all the disciples would fall away (Matt. 26:31).

### “The cumulative weight of these revelations must have greatly depressed them” (BKC, 2:322).

# Questions

### Summarize the three questions of the disciples in 13:36-37, 14:5, and 14:8.

#### Peter: “Where are you going and why can’t I go with you?”

#### Thomas: “How can we go with you if we don’t even know where you’re going?”

#### Philip: “Can we see the Father?”

### How does Jesus answer Peter’s question in 14:1-4?

#### “I’m going to prepare heaven for you until I return.”

### In what ways does Christ respond to the question from Thomas in 14:6-7?

#### He declares to be the only way to God.

#### “Salvation is more important than geographical location.”

### What does the “greater works” mean in 14:12-14?

#### **14:12-14.** The apostles would not necessarily do more stupendous miracles than Jesus did (e.g., feeding 5,000) but their outreach would be greater (e.g., Peter in one sermon had 3,000 converts). This was possible **because** Jesus had gone **to the Father** and had sent the Spirit. Miracles are important, but some evangelists have done **even greater things than these** by preaching the good news to many thousands of people.[[1]](#footnote-1)

# Tentative Theme/Thrust Statements (Step 5)

The reason the disciples shouldn’t have to feel orphaned was because they would soon have the Spirit as their permanent Counselor (14:15-21).

# Possible Illustrations (Step 6)

### Interest: [We all face confusion and discouragement]

#### Christmas is my favorite time of the year. I love the red & green lights—and white ones too. But for many of us, the red turns blue. You know what I mean?

Red & Green

Blue

#### For some of us, it’s a tremendous time—but then the reality of life sets in afterwards. I always feel this way when we take down our decorations and the house looks so plain. Even after the best of Christmases, we still have to go back to work, we have to pay off the Christmas bills, and other realities hit us.

Math

Confusion

#### For others of us, Christmas isn’t all that great anyway. Our expectations might be too high, our family relationships still unresolved, or whatever. We feel confused and discouraged.

Confused

Relationships

### Need: Are you confused or discouraged today?

Discouraged

#### Maybe it has nothing to do with Christmas being over. Maybe you are disappointed with missed opportunities or with what’s happening at work—not feeling understood, working too many hours, not getting paid decently, or bad decisions where you pay a heavy price.

Gettysburg

Soccer

#### For some of us, discouragement comes when we have prayed and prayed but our prayers don’t seem to go higher than the ceiling.

Confusion

Disapp. w/ God

#### At other times, we’re confused or discouraged and we don’t even know why!

#### In any case, we just know that we need God to fill the void. Wouldn’t it be great to just exchange our confusion and disappointment with Christ’s comfort?

Empty Box

**The Cross**

*“I simply argue that the cross should be raised at the center of the marketplace as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town's garbage heap; at a cross road so cosmopolitan they had to write His title in Greek...at the kind of a place where cynics talk smut and thieves curse and soldiers gamble. Because that is where He died. And that is what He died for. And that is what He died about. This is where churchmen ought to be and what churchmen ought to be about.”*

# -- George MacLeod

# Possible Applications (Step 6)

### Text

# From my NTS John Notes:

## (13:31–16:33) The purpose Christ's last discourse predicted that after His death His disciples would see Him again and profit from the teaching of the Holy Spirit was to exhort them to successful ministry in a proper priority of relationships.

### (13:31–14:31) The way Jesus answered questions about His departure was to claim to be the only way to God and to promise his disciples guidance through the Holy Spirit.

#### (13:31-38) The reason Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him before his departure for a few days between his death and resurrection was because He was God.

#### (14:1-4) The way Jesus comforted his disciples after noting that he will be crucified was to promise that they would join him in heaven after he has prepared it for them.

#### (14:5-14) The way Jesus answered questions from his disciples was by declaring himself the only way to God and equal with the Father.

##### (14:5-7) Jesus answered Thomas’s question about Jesus’ destination and the disciples’ inability to follow him by saying he was the only route to the Father.

##### (14:8-14) Jesus answered Philip’s request to see the Father by declaring himself to be equal with the Father.

**John 13:31–14:31 Sermon Outline:**

**Subject: How can you be most effective for Christ?**

**I. Accept that Christ knows what’s best for you (13:31–14:14).**

A. He knew Peter’s future and he knows yours (13:31-38).

B. He’s preparing heaven for you (14:1-4).

C. He’s the only way you can reach God (14:5-14).

**II. Submit to His Spirit (14:15-31).**

A. The Spirit came to counsel and teach (15-21).

B. The Spirit came to enable obedience and peace (22-31).

**Main Idea: Serve Christ by accepting His plan and submitting to His Spirit.**

# Outlines (Steps 2-5)

**Confusion to Comfort**

***John 14:1-14***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# Exegetical Idea: The way Jesus comforts his disciples about his impending death is by promising to return for them and by being the way to God.

# I. The way Jesus comforts his disciples about his impending death is by promising to prepare heaven until he returns for them in the Rapture (14:1-4).

## Jesus exhorts the disciples to replace their troubled hearts with trust in God (14:1).

## Jesus promises to prepare heaven until he brought them home at the Rapture (14:2-3).

## Jesus claims that they knew the way to heaven (14:4).

# II. The way Jesus comforts his disciples about his impending death is by declaring to be the way to God (14:5-14).

## Jesus answers Thomas’s question about where he is going by saying that he himself is the way to God (5-7).

## Jesus answers Philip’s desire to see the Father by declaring that knowing Christ is actually knowing the Father (8-14).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will find comfort in knowing the Christ is both the way to God and the one coming back for them.

**Sermon Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)—Steps 5-6

**Confusion to Comfort**

***John 14:1-14***

**Topic:** Confusion

**Theme:** How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?

**Thrust:** Trust Jesus to return as the only way to heaven.

**Purpose:** The listeners will find comfort in knowing that Christ is both the way to God and the one coming back for them.

# Introduction

### *The Book of John:* In this book the noun “belief” never appears, but the verb forms to “believe” appear 87 times and in nearly every chapter!

### How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?

### *John 14:1-14: Jesus shows how to gain comfort*

# 1. Trust Jesus to return for you (14:1-4).

## Replace your troubled heart with trust in God (14:1).

## Know that Jesus is preparing heaven until he brings you home at the Rapture (14:2-3).

## Know the way to heaven (14:4).

# 2. Trust Jesus to bring you to God (14:5-14).

## Jesus is the way to God (14:5-7).

## To know Christ is actually to know the Father (14:8-14).

# Conclusion

### How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?

### *Jesus:* Trust Jesus to return as the only way to heaven (Main Idea).

### *Believing*

#### What confuses you right now?

#### Why wouldn’t you want Christ’s comfort instead?

# Bulletin Blanks Filled In

# How to Turn Confusion into Comfort

# The Book of John

## In this book the noun “belief” never appears, but the verb forms to “believe” appear 87 times and in nearly every chapter!

## How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?

# John 14:1-14: Jesus shows how to gain comfort

## Trust Jesus to return for you (14:1-4).

## Trust Jesus to bring you to God (14:5-14).

# Jesus

## How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?

## Trust Jesus to return as the only way to heaven (Main Idea).

# Believing

## What confuses you right now?

## Why wouldn’t you want Christ’s comfort instead?

# Bulletin Blanks Empty

# How to Turn Confusion into Comfort

# The Book of John

## In this book the noun “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” never appears, but the verb forms to “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” appear 87 times and in nearly every chapter!

## How can you replace your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

# John 14:1-14: Jesus shows how to gain comfort

## Trust Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for you (14:1-4).

## Trust Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you to God (14:5-14).

# Jesus

## How can you replace your confusion with Christ’s comfort?

## Trust Jesus to return as the only \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to heaven (Main Idea).

# Believing

## What \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you right now?

## Why wouldn’t you want Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ instead?

1. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:323. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)