

The Father Dwells in Jesus — **John 14:1-14**

Jesus replied, "Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" John 14:9 NET

Jesus' conversation with Philip somehow reveals our skepticism as human beings when we daily experience the power of God in our lives; but even seeing it, our hearts remain doubtful at the various manifestations of God in humankind.

God, just as he lives in Jesus Christ, also lives in us. God's presence prompts us to do good works for the benefit of others, especially those most in need. Sometimes we get distracted and disconnect from Jesus, losing the direction of where we are going. We leave Jesus aside, and we become the center of attraction, distorting the presence of Christ in our life and taking the lead away from God.

I travel a lot for my ministry with Mennonite Central Committee East Coast (although currently, travel has been canceled due to the pandemic). Those trips can be exhausting after a while, even though flying is relaxing for me. Five to ten minutes after fastening my seatbelt, I find it difficult to keep my eyes open, so it becomes a "me moment."

One time, I met a woman on a delayed flight from Florida to Pennsylvania. She was eager to talk and did not let me sleep. I was furious, but God had other plans that I did not know. For over an hour, she took advantage of the opportunity to talk and release some frustrations. She told me many things, but the one that caught my attention was that she was sponsoring a girl in Guatemala. She had even traveled to meet the girl, but she remained skeptical (she thought it was a setup) and didn't know if what she was doing really made sense or was worth it. She was thinking about discontinuing the sponsorship.

I looked at her and smiled. I finally understood God's purpose for the flight delay and not letting me sleep. In one of the few moments that I actually spoke, I said: "You know, I believe that God has a purpose for our lives, and I think it was no accident that you and I are sitting next to each other. God has put us here today to confirm to you that what you are doing for the girl in Guatemala makes sense and is worthwhile. I was a sponsored child by the Vision program in Honduras, which allowed my siblings and me to get a good education in a private school in my hometown. Someone whom I never knew sponsored my education, which enabled me to have better opportunities in life. Now I can make a difference in the lives of others today."

She looked at me, astonished, and tears came to her eyes! She said, "Thanks! Thank you very much! This is exactly what I was looking for and what I needed to hear—a real testimony of someone who had this experience, and God put you in my path. I got goosebumps. . . ."

God dwells in Christ, and Christ in us. We just need to believe so the eyes of our understanding can be opened and the cloudiness of doubt is removed from our darkened hearts. Isn't it interesting how someone who has been touched by Christ, who has invited God to dwell in him/her could touch and transform my life, thousands of miles away, without our knowing each other? This only happens when we open the doors of our hearts for God to dwell in us, allowing us to be agents of change—as Christ did and continues to do in the world.

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I hope that during this Christmas season, in which an atmosphere of love and joy is breathed, people are more sensitive to the needs of others, smile more, and are willing to talk to their neighbor even during the pandemic. I pray that the Christmas spirit, the incarnate God will touch our hearts and transform the lives of many to build a more just society for all.

Jesus replied, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 NET

Merry Christmas! Blessings!

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Looking for participant guide page numbers in the leader guide? The page numbers in the leader guide work for both guides.

Resources for this session

- [“Praying at the New Year”](#) by Carol Penner
- contemporary and traditional versions of the [Apostles’ Creed](#)