

## “Promises of Jesus: I Will...Come Back for You”

Scripture: John 14:1-7

Graphics: returning

Big Truth: Being a follower of Jesus is a response to the promises of Jesus, as offered and proven by the actions of Jesus. It’s not something we initiate, but something Jesus has already done for us. Jesus promised to love us. Jesus promised to make us fishers of men. Jesus promised to give us rest. Jesus promised to come back for us. Our response is to find what Jesus is doing and join him as we live out our salvation in Him.

Focus Phrase: Jesus promises to come back again, so I will be ready.

### 1. Introduction

- A. **“I’ll be back.”** That phrase became famous in the 1984 hit film *The Terminator*, when Arnold Schwarzenegger first used it. In the scene, his character, the Terminator, a cyborg assassin, was refused entry to the police station where his targets, Sarah Connor and Kyle Reese, were being detained. He surveyed the counter, then told the police desk sergeant: “I’ll be back.” Moments later, he drove a car into the station, destroying the counter, and really messing up the place.” Yet, to this day, that phrase is always said like he did, “I’ll be baaack.”
- B. Most likely, we all have a story of someone in our lives who, at some point, promised to come back. It may have been promised to you when you were dropped off at summer camp by your parents. It may have been promised when you went to school or maybe even dropped off at the mall with friends.
- C. We say it more often than we realize, probably. “I’ll be back” when we run for a quick errand. I’ve told the story before of the time when I left our daughter Abby, 2 years old at the time, in a restaurant after we’d all gone to the car (Stacy waste’t with us, obviously). When I realized she wasn’t with us, I went back in to find her. She was safe in her high chair and the people at the next table asked, “We were wondering when you were coming back!”
- D. There are some tragic stories of people leaving, promising to come back, and then never returning. I think of stories of women and men going off to war and never returning.
- E. **The promises we make are important. Promises have power!**
- F. We said in week 1 of this I WILL series that promises aren’t just meaningless words on a page or empty words that come out of our mouths. A promise is a commitment that’s meant to be taken seriously. Promises are hard work. They may cause us to have to rearrange our schedules or say no to something else in order to fulfill those promises. When we say, “I will...” and then follow through, we’re saying that the other person is of value...that we care about them.

- G. No where is that more important to our faith and life as followers of Jesus than in the promises of our Lord and Savior. Jesus made promises to his followers - to US - and those promises have POWER in our lives.
  - i. Jesus said, “I Will love you.” And he does, so we know how to love others!
  - ii. Jesus said, “I Will make for fish for people.” And we are made into faith-sharers, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - iii. Jesus said, “I Will give you rest.” And our souls find rest in the assurance of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus.
- H. But there’s one final promises we want to talk about today. In John 14:3, in the NIV translation, Jesus promised this: “I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”
- I. Jesus said, “I will come back for you” which is the title of our final message in this sermon series. I’m not sure he said it like The Terminator, but if that helps us, then maybe He did!
- J. But the power of this promise is not in the WAY Jesus said it. **The POWER of this promise is that Jesus is THE WAY.** And we’ll continue to wait for Jesus’ return and be ready when he does come again. We don’t know WHEN that will be, but we know the outcome of it.
- K. *Jesus promised to come back again, so I will be ready.* That’s where we’re heading today.
- L. Let’s pray and dive into the Word...
- M. **PRAY!**
- N. In your bibles, find John 14, starting in verse 1...Jesus said, “I’ll be baaack.”

## 2. Scripture

- A. **READ John 14:1-7**
- B. First, we need to figure out WHY Jesus promised his disciples that he would come again. The clues come in chapter 13, just before our current chapter, when Jesus was eating the Last Supper with the disciples. In that meeting, Jesus said things like: “Judas will betray me” and “I’m going to be arrested, killed, and on the third day rise again” and “Peter will deny me.” The reason Jesus promised to come back was because he told them he was LEAVING.
- C. And it was at that moment that the disciples really started to get concerned about all this that Jesus was saying. What are you TALKING about?
- D. Now, Jesus, who could read a room like no one else ever, could SEE that the disciples were shaken...troubled by what he was saying. He responded with our first verse for today, “Do not let your hearts be troubled! Do not be afraid!” “Believe in me...have faith in what I’ve taught you and shown you.”

- E. Besides that, Jesus said in John 16:7, that in order for God's plan to be activated, Jesus would have to leave first. Jesus said, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate (The Holy Spirit) will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you."
- F. In John 14, Jesus began to give them a vision of the future... a vision that included not only a PLACE to which Jesus was going, leaving them, physically, but a PATHWAY and a PROCESS for them to follow in the future.
- G. The PLACE was with the Father in heaven.
  - i. Jesus gave a glimpse of it in verse 2. The Father's house... with many dwelling places. And in that house, Jesus was preparing a place for them.
  - ii. Now, most scholars agree that Jesus was painting a picture of a future reality for those who follow Jesus. Are there literal rooms or dwelling places? That's not certain. Will those rooms have a roof and walls? Will they be like THIS room? No one knows, for sure.
  - iii. YET, what we DO know, and what Jesus was trying to convey to the disciples, was that there is a future reality coming when those who have put their trust in Christ will be welcomed into the everlasting presence of the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - iv. I believe it will be an actual place, even if Jesus wasn't specific about what that will be like.
  - v. But in order to GET to that PLACE to which Jesus is going NOW, Jesus will need to come back, after He's gone, and get the disciples to show them the WAY.
- H. That's why Jesus was very sure to make our promise for today, "I will come back again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."
  - i. Now, you may ask why Jesus needs to come again, since he came once and that should be enough. The short answer is that Jesus promised to come again in the final chapter of the history of the world, IN ORDER TO FINALLY SET THINGS RIGHT.
  - ii. God isn't finished until Creation is restored to its original fullness... full communion with God, full perfection, filled with full worship and the full presence of God in our lives.
  - iii. Revelation 21:3-4 gives us the picture: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and be their God; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”

- iv. Jesus promised to come again because the Father’s plans won’t be complete until He does.
- I. Of course all this talk about leaving troubled the disciples greatly. It would trouble any of us to hear that someone we love and follow was leaving, to a place we didn’t know how to get to...that the only way to get there is to wait until He comes back to get us. Why can’t you just take us with you now, Jesus?
- J. And Thomas, who we so endearingly call Doubting Thomas for his skepticism after Jesus’ return, still wanted to know more about WHERE Jesus was going. If they didn’t know exactly WHERE these dwelling places were, they couldn’t POSSIBLY know the WAY (the PATHWAY) to get there, right? Or HOW to get there (the PROCESS). He wanted to keep following Jesus...
- K. But in Jesus’ promise to return, He also told the disciples more about the PATHWAY and the PROCESS.
- L. The PATHWAY, in verse 6, was clear - the PATHWAY was not a superhighway or a gravel road. You couldn’t use your GPS to get there. **The PATHWAY to the promise is Jesus.**
  - i. He said, “I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.”
  - ii. In order to get to where Jesus was going, the disciple needed to go through Jesus himself.
  - iii. When Jesus promised, “I will come back for you...” He was giving himself as the PATHWAY to get to the Father.
  - iv. Jesus answered Thomas’ question about how to know the way to this place by simply saying, “I am the WAY...”
  - v. But that still didn’t answer the question of HOW...
- M. The Way is Jesus. But the PROCESS by which the disciples would follow the PATHWAY to the PLACE from which Jesus promised to return to get them... what was THAT? You might be surprised to hear that it’s once again, Jesus.
  - i. “If you know me, you will know my Father also.”
  - ii. The PROCESS to get to the PLACE where the Father is, was for the disciples to know Jesus...to put their FAITH in Jesus.
  - iii. They were probably thinking that they DID know him. They spent 3 years with him. They ate with him, slept in tents together, listened and learned from him. They saw him do miraculous things, healed people, fed people, forgave people.
  - iv. Yet, they wouldn’t have a FULL sense of who Jesus was until after he walked out of his own grave under his own power.

- v. In order to learn THAT, they would need to believe in him, fully. To believe in the resurrected Jesus and not just the Jesus that was sitting in front of them at the moment.
- N. This promise of Jesus' return wasn't something that would happen in their lifetime, obviously. It wasn't something they would fully understand until much later, as some of them were writing the gospels.
- O. Yet, the PLACE was set. The PATHWAY was Jesus. And the PROCESS was faith in Jesus.
- P. The POWER of the PROMISE to return - to come again - was the promise for their future - their everlasting future - to realize a Revelation 21 life forever.

### 3. Application

- A. So what does this promise from Jesus mean in your life and mine?
- B. We've heard Jesus promise to love us, to make us fishers of people, and to give us rest. Those promises are for the here and now, really. They are practical promises for us to live into now, with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- C. This last promise is something that we hear, but there's nothing we can DO about it, right?
- D. Think of it this way. Each of us spends lots of time preparing for the future. Investing money for retirement, planning your next vacation or for the new school year. You write a will so your kids will be taken care of when you're gone.
- E. All that planning is fine, but the promise of the plan we have from Jesus is infinitely better!
- F. No matter what happens to you in this life, Jesus promised to come back to get you...to get every single person who has been faithful to Him...so that you can be with Him forever...in the PLACE he's prepared for you.
- G. When Jesus is ready, he's going to come again and take you to where He is...to be WITH him. This really is the ultimate promise of Jesus in your life.
- H. You know the PLACE you're going - to be with God.
- I. You know the PATHWAY to get there - the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- J. You know the PROCESS to get there - faith that Jesus is the Son of God, and Savior of the world, the only one who ever rose from the dead under his own power.
- K. Because of ALL that, your life, if you follow Him, takes on a completely different vector. In engineering-speak, a vector is a direction and speed.

- L. You can make all the plans you want given the promises of this world - the wealth, the success, the retirement savings, the hobbies, work, and play. Yet, the plans you make in this world will end...they are finite.
- M. The only plan that has eternal value is the one you make to give your life fully to Jesus, given his promise to come back again.
- N. How do we know that his promise to come back is true? The answer is because every other promise Jesus made has come, or is coming, true. His promise to love you. His promise to make you fish for people. His promise to give your soul rest. His promise of salvation. His promise to send the Holy Spirit. All true. The invitation is to live in those promises.
- O. His ultimate promise is also true...He will come back.
- P. And so, our work as followers of Jesus is to be ready for Jesus' return. Does your life reflect the life of someone who is 100% ready for the Son of God and Savior of the world to come again ANY MOMENT? Today is the day to get right with God's plan for your life without any excuses.
- Q. To be ready, we must be doing the things that Jesus promised to do through us - to love, to share our faith, and to be assured of his salvation...to believe.
- R. Jesus promises to come back again, so I will be ready.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- A. I think we all agree that Jesus' return will be the most incredible day of any day.
- B. Yet, when I consider the fact that some have not yet responded positively to the PATHWAY and the PROCESS that is Jesus, there's a tension in me.
- C. I want Jesus to return today - right now. But what about my brother or your sister who doesn't acknowledge God? What about the wayward spouse or rebellious children who are walking away from God's grace?
- D. Church, we still have time to believe and tell them...to show them Jesus...to pray for them and love them.
- E. Jesus' promise to return is still to be fulfilled. Until then, let's be ready and then let's love them, fish for them, and show them Jesus' soul rest they crave.
- F. Imagine a church that wasn't ever afraid to live fully into the promises of Jesus.
- G. Do you believe them? Do you want to live in His promises?
- H. Jesus said, "I will..." That changes everything. He promised. He will deliver.
- I. Let's pray...