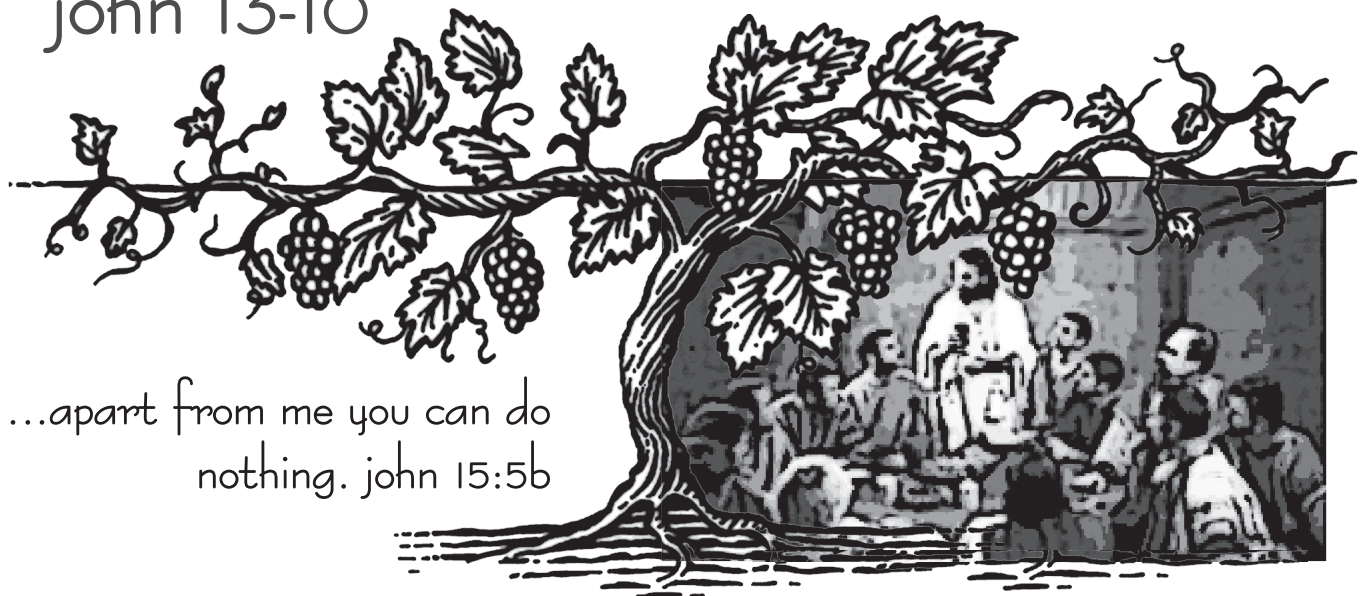


john 13-16



...apart from me you can do  
nothing. john 15:5b

# The Upper Room Discourse



# Calendar & Contents

\* Homegroups will review the study together the week before the teaching date listed.

<i>Study</i>	<i>Teaching Date*</i>	<i>Page</i>
Sources & Abbreviations		1
Homegroup Childcare		3
Introduction to the Upper Room Discourse		5
Study One You Should Do As I Have Done	January 24	7
Study Two And, It Was Night	January 31	11
Study Three Now the Son of Man is Glorified	February 7	15
Study Four Way, Truth, Life	February 14	21
Study Five Jesus, The Spirit and the Father	February 21	27





## Calendar

<i>Study</i>	<i>Teaching Date*</i>	<i>Page</i>
Study Six He Will Teach You All Things	February 28	31
Study Seven Abide in Me	March 6	35
Study Eight The Commandment to Love	March 13	39
Study Nine On Being Hated	March 20	43
	(March 27 Easter Sunday)	
Study Ten The Conviction of the Holy Spirit	April 3	49
Study Eleven From Sorrow to Joy	April 10	55
	(April 17 Retreat Sunday)	
Study Twelve I Have Overcome the World	April 24	59

# Sources & Abbreviations

<b>Burge</b>	Gary Burge, <i>John: The NIV Application Commentary</i> , (Zondervan, 2000).
<b>Calvin</b>	Calvin, John, <i>John</i> , The Crossway Classic Commentaries, (Crossway Books, 1994).
<b>Carson</b>	D. A. Carson, <i>The Gospel According to John</i> , (Inter-Varsity Press, 1986).
<b>ESV</b>	<i>English Standard Version</i>
<b>Gundry</b>	Robert H. Gundry, <i>Commentary on the New Testament</i> , (Hendrickson, 2010).
<b>KJV</b>	<i>King James Version</i>
<b>Milne</b>	Bruce Milne, <i>The Message of John</i> (Inter-Varsity Press, 1993).
<b>NIV</b>	<i>New International Version</i>
<b>NLT</b>	<i>New Living Translation</i>
<b>Tasker</b>	R. V. G. Tasker, <i>The Gospel According to St. John</i> (Eerdmans, 1960).

All Scripture passages are taken from the *English Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.





# Homegroup Childcare

## *Why Do We Do This?*

Our church philosophy is that everyone in our church is part of our church family and the larger family of God. We believe it is our privilege and responsibility to care for our church family, including the very youngest members. As you minister to the children in our family, we hope that in the process you would:

- Meet members of your church family you might not otherwise meet
- See God in unexpected ways and places
- Find a role you may enjoy and in which you like to serve
- Enjoy yourself!

## *What Is Involved?*

- Each Homegroup is scheduled to provide childcare helpers approximately every 3-4 months for a total of 2-3 times between September and June.
- This is strictly a helper role where you are assisting children's ministries leaders as they care for and lead the children.
- Be ready to be flexible and serve at a service time you don't normally attend!
- Helpers are placed in the following groups: Nursery, Toddlers, Preschool, and a very few Elementary (and one female Bathroom Monitor at the 2 morning services).
- You can request an age group, but Elementary spots are very limited and hard to accommodate.

## *Exemptions:*

- Those who currently work as a Youth Leader or Children's Ministry Leader are exempt
- Exemptions are not given for the important ministries of Worship, Sound/Power Point, Info Table etc. since they are not out for all of the adult service when they serve in those capacities.

- We do give exemptions for health reasons or if there are other reasons where it wouldn't be appropriate for someone to care for our children (psychologically, felony, etc.). We ask that if you fall into this category to please let your Homegroup leader know so we can exempt you.

## *Substitutes:*

- If you can't do either Sunday your group is schedule, **you are responsible to find a sub for yourself.**
- Donna Sugano is a great resource if you need help finding a sub or working out a switch with another group (donna@sbcommunity.org).
- All subs need to be someone who attends SBCC regularly and should be in high school or older.
- We really do need every person scheduled every week!

## *The Day You Serve:*

- **MOST IMPORTANT!** Please check in at the Info Table **20 min. before the service starts.**
- Report to area right away. (Don't stop and talk.) **Kids are arriving!**
- Sick at the last minute? Call or text Donna at (805)705-9573.

**Donna Sugano**  
**(805)705-9573**







# Introduction to the Upper Room Discourse

In John's Gospel the reader is given an intimate glimpse into the last night of Jesus' life before the crucifixion. Matthew, Mark and Luke offer us very succinct, brief views of what went on before Jesus was arrested. John, however, gives us a long look at Jesus' last night. In the fourth gospel we have five chapters (13-17) with no parallel in the other gospels.

When we turn to John 13:1 we have several indicators that John is moving his readers in a new direction. First, there is the announcement that the Feast of Passover is at hand. A new phase in Jesus' ministry has begun. Second, Jesus knows that his *hour* has come. We will see the significance of this word in what follows. Third, Jesus moves from a public to a private ministry. His attention will now be focused on his disciples and on them alone. John tells us that Jesus *loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end* (13:1).

When we come to the Upper Room, we have come to the end. When Jesus concludes his final words to his disciples, he will make his way to the Mount of Olives in order to face arrest, trial and crucifixion.

What a privilege to spend time with Jesus in this room. As we study these passages together, let us do more than that. Let us pray that God's Spirit will move in us and among us. Let us ask that we will be made more like Jesus as we spend time with him and his disciples on this dark night.

## ***A Word About This Study***

The following 12 studies were written by various staff members of SBCC, all to the same end, that is, to get us into God's word. In a real sense we will study these passages time and again.

First, notice that each study begins with a series of identical questions. These are intended to simply get us into the passage itself. Before looking at any questions or reading any commentary, let us let the Bible speak. This is the most important part of our study.

Second, work through the questions and brief notes in each study. This will be your second look at the passage.

Third, we will come together as homegroups and do it again. That is, we will open our Bibles, read the passage and ask, *What does it say? What does it mean? What does God have for us here?*

Fourth, we will come together on Sundays to worship the Jesus of John 13–16. Part of our worship is devoting ourselves to the preaching of his word, asking for the anointing and blessing of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our church.





# You Should Do As I Have Done

John 13:1-20

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

Read verses 1-17.

We are told that Jesus, *having loved his own [who were] in the world, loved them to the end*. Biblical scholar Robert Gundry points out that *the end* doesn't refer to the end of Jesus' life but rather, refers to the *completion* of his salvation work.<sup>1</sup>

What is the significance of this event taking place right before the Passover feast? (Hint: what might happen as preparation for that feast? See Exodus 12:21.)

Review verse 7. What was it that Jesus was referring to when he said to Peter, *You don't know now what I am doing, but later you will understand?*



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<sup>1</sup> Robert Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Hendrickson Publishers 2010, p. 424.



Read again 13:8. What kind of *washing* is Jesus talking about? How did Peter misunderstand him?

In what ways might this foot-washing be related to the *washing* of baptism?

Jesus teaches—and models—a servant's life, one that ultimately leads to the humiliation of a servant's death. In words both spoken and acted out, he shows his disciples, and us, how we are to live the Christian life. The problem with this section of Scripture is that we often like to *serve* but get squeamish at the thought of being a *servant*. Jesus doesn't allow room for that kind of thinking as he begins to wash his disciples' feet—a task considered to be lowest-rung for a household servant. He models what he wants us to follow. Think about what Jesus is asking here as it pertains to your own life. What kind of service do you enjoy and why? Where do you balk at being a *servant* and why?

Jesus gives an explanation of the foot-washing to his disciples in verses 12-17. What does he command his disciples to do, and what does it mean?

Read Luke 22:24-27 to enhance your understanding of these verses in John. Jesus calls us to serve others by his example. Toward *what end* is he asking this of us?

Perhaps even more difficult than serving is being on the receiving end of such service. As we can see in this passage, Peter struggled with this too. Commentator R.V.G. Tasker says this:

In making [his] protest Peter was in fact displaying the pride of unredeemed men and women, who are so confident of their ability to save themselves that they instinctively resist the suggestion that they need divine cleansing. They desire to do everything for themselves.<sup>2</sup>

In what attitudes or areas of your life do you act as a self-savior, resisting help from others or from God?

What practical steps can you take to surrender these things to Christ's lordship?

Read verses 18-20.

Jesus selected each of his disciples; he chose them and called them to follow him. Back in John 6:70, Jesus says, *Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!* Verse 18 reveals that Jesus has always known one of his disciples would betray him. What is the reason given?



<sup>2</sup> Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: John, IVP 1983, p. 155.



In verse 18b Jesus says, *He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.* The symbolism here may be hard for us to relate to, but in ancient Middle Eastern culture, to share a meal was an act of great intimacy. Relationships were formed and strengthened over meals. And yet, here we have a statement from Jesus that depicts that intimacy betrayed. To *lift a heel* against someone would be tantamount to a curse. To expose the bottom of one's foot toward someone would be a sign of deep contempt. Jesus, though he knew that Scripture must be fulfilled through this betrayal, seems nonetheless bewildered by the pain of it.

Think about Judas for a moment. Scripture is full of scenes of betrayal and evil, but Judas is different. He lived in the light of the Messiah's glory, listened to his teaching, and witnessed

his miracles. Yet still, he chose to turn and live in darkness. Throughout the gospels we see Peter's bumbling and denial, hear Thomas' doubt, but never do we see anything but good behavior from Judas. How is the story of Judas a potential warning to us?

What is a take-away application for your life from this portion of Scripture? What kind of plan will you implement to make it possible?

## Praying The Passage

- Marvel that the God of the universe would condescend to wash our feet! No other religion speaks of such a God as this. Thank Jesus for his deep love for us (v. 1), and praise him that he is the all-powerful God (v. 3). Consider how Jesus fulfills Psalm 62:11-12, embodying both the power and the love of God.
- Take a few moments of silence as a group, and in your hearts lay before Jesus those dirty places in our lives that are desperately in need of his divine cleansing. Confess aloud if appropriate, and invite Jesus into those places.
- Pray for the church that we would confess our sins to one another, and that we would love one another as Christ has loved us. Pray that we would not be squeamish servants, but be willing to wash one another's feet.

# And, It Was Night

John 13:21-30

Immediately after the stirring example of Jesus as the servant leader and the encouragement to his disciples to exercise their own leadership with a similar mindset and emphasis (vv. 1-20), the narrative in the Upper Room takes a very sharp and dark turn. As Jesus has made clear, the servant-king will also be a suffering Savior and the events that unfold in these verses set in motion Jesus' agonizing march toward the cross.

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

This passage depicts a raw, emotional scene. John tells his readers that *Jesus was troubled in his spirit*. The Greek term translated as *troubled* can also mean *stirred up* or *agitated* and appears elsewhere in the New Testament. Read the passages below and make a note of how each talks about being troubled, stirred up, or agitated.

John 5:1-7

John 11:32-33





Acts 17:8-13 (look for two uses of the word)

How do each of these additional uses of the term help to fill out the picture of what is happening in Jesus' spirit in the Upper Room?

What does it mean to you that Jesus is affected in this way by what is going on around him?

Jesus is *troubled in his spirit* because of the gravity of what is coming next. *Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.* The word *betray* is powerful. What Judas has planned is not simply an inconvenience to Jesus, a harmless expression of the disciple's individuality, or a personal matter. It is a betrayal.

In important ways, Judas' betrayal of Jesus was a one-time, non-repeatable event. But, in other ways, all sin amounts to betrayal.

Have you ever thought of your sins as acts of betrayal? How does it impact you to think of sin in this way?

The disciples, understandably, want to know which of them Jesus means. Peter enlists the help of John, identified as the disciple *whom Jesus loved*. Jesus uses Peter's question as an opportunity to make one final appeal to Judas. Commentator Bruce Milne helps clarify.

John's *who is it?* provokes Jesus to identify the traitor by handing him a morsel from the dish (26). The gift of a tidbit by the host at such a meal was a mark of special favour. Thus even as he unmasks the traitor Jesus reaches out to him in a final astonishing act of loving friendship and appeal. This gesture is further augmented if, as appears to have been the case (26), Judas was within arm's reach of Jesus through occupying the place on his other side, the host's left, the place of special honour. For one last, lingering moment Judas' destiny hangs in the balance as the love of God incarnate shines one more time into his benighted heart. (Milne, p. 202)



How have you seen this kind of persistent, wooing love of God in your life?

Yet, in the face of such love and grace, Judas—empowered by Satan—makes the tragic choice to betray Jesus. The other gospels help fill in the details of Judas and his story. Read the following passages to get a clearer picture of why Judas betrayed Jesus and what took place in the aftermath of that decision.

Matthew 26:14-16

Mark 14:43-46

Matthew 27:3-5

With this broader context in view, the final words of John 13:30 take on even greater significance. More than a marker of first century sunsets, the words *It was night* communicate much more. With Judas' betrayal, darkness is on full display.

Yet, God will use this darkness to bring light to all the world. How have you seen God redeem hard things in your life, using them for his own glory?





In some ways, Judas' betrayal is simply unthinkable. We might expect persecution by one of the religious leaders, but not betrayal by an insider, by one of the chosen 12. Yet, that is exactly who turns on Jesus. One who had heard the same teachings and witnessed the same miracles as the other 11 responds to Jesus with treachery.

How does the tragic example of Judas challenge your discipleship?

For some, this story resonates a little too much. Have you experienced betrayal—perhaps by a spouse, a close friend or a business partner? How could this story serve to comfort to you?

What is one encouragement or challenge that you can take away from this passage that would inform the way you live out your day-to-day Christian life?

### Praying The Passage

- Marvel at the Christ who is sovereign—knowing the evil that is about to happen (v. 21) and yet willing to suffer a humiliating betrayal at the hands of Judas for the sake of our salvation. Once again thank him for his deep love for us displayed in this passage.
- Consider the words, *And it was night* (v. 30). Name those places in our world or in our personal circumstances where it is hard to see God in the darkness.
- Pray for God to accomplish his purposes and shine his light into in the dark places of our lives. Extend those prayers into the darkness that binds people groups and nations across the earth.

# Now the Son of Man is Glorified

John 13:31-35

John 13:31 brings us to a significant turning point in John's Gospel. We have been in the Upper Room with Jesus and his disciples. We have seen Jesus wash his disciple's feet and heard his command that we do likewise. We have seen Jesus send Judas out to betray him. Now there are only twelve men in the room, Jesus and 11 disciples. In verse 31 we begin a lengthy monologue from Jesus to his disciples, usually called *The Upper Room Discourse*. This *address* continues through John 16. Think about it. After three years together, Jesus knows he will be crucified and dead in short order. These are his last words to the men he has loved so deeply.

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

How many times do we find the word *glorify* or *glorified* in this passage?

The glory of the Son has been a major theme of John's Gospel. The reader of John doesn't have to get any further than 1:14 to learn that the coming of the Word of God in flesh is all about glory. Specifically, John wants us to know that in Jesus we are seeing the glory of the Son who comes from the Father and reflects the Father's glory.





Another theme in John is the coming *hour* of Jesus' glory. See John 2:4; 4:21, 26; 5:28; 7:30 among others. There is an hour coming that we are waiting for. When this hour comes we will see the glory of the Son in a new way.

Finally, in 12:23 we learn Jesus' *hour* has come! Read 12:23-26. What is Jesus talking about? What is his *hour*?

What has just happened that allows Jesus to say, *Now is the Son of Man glorified*?

Jesus uses a past tense verb as he begins his farewell discourse (*Now is the Son of Man glorified...*) Why do you think Jesus speaks in the past tense?

When does Jesus say he will be glorified by the Father?

Unpack verse 33. Where is Jesus going? Why would they want to go with him? Why can't the disciples go with him? Hint: see the rest of our short passage.

How does he address his disciples? What might this convey to them? (Note, this is the only time Jesus addresses his disciples in this way in any of the gospels, but in 1 John, the apostle addresses his readers this way seven times.)

Look at verses 34-35. Jesus moves quickly to give his disciples a *new commandment*. What is it?

Bible students are quick to point out that the command to love is not really new. Look up the following two verses.

Deuteronomy 6:5

Leviticus 19:18

How does Jesus' *new* commandment go beyond these Old Testament commands to love?

From the passage itself, what is our model for love? How does this instruct you practically?

Again, from the passage itself, what is the magnetic effect of disciples loving other disciples?

Respond to the following quotation:

The *new command* is simple enough for a toddler to memorize and appreciate, profound enough that the most mature believers are repeatedly embarrassed at how poorly they comprehend it and put it into practice. (Carson, p. 484)





What does it mean to you to *love* other disciples? Describe how you have seen this put into practice in the lives of people in our church.

When we consider this command to *love one another* it is easy to love the people we already love. And it is easy to love people with whom we hardly have to rub shoulders. But Jesus gives this commandment to a group of men with differing temperaments and personalities, differing levels of drive and ambition. After three years of travelling together there must have been tension between them. It is to this group, now diminished to eleven men, whom Jesus says, *love one another*.

How does this command to *love one another* challenge you? Who have you struggled to love in your church? In your homegroup? How can you live out this call to love?

As a homegroup, read the following passages and consider how they inform us of both the *importance of* and the *how to* of loving one another.

Romans 12:10

1 John 3:18

1 John 4:7-10, 20

1 Peter 2:10

In 1970 Francis Schaeffer wrote a small book titled, *The Mark of the Christian*. It was a book about Jesus' *new commandment*. Read the following quotation from Schaeffer's book. Evaluate yourself and evaluate your church. Are you, are we, bearing this mark?

The church is to be a loving church in a dying culture. How, then, is the dying culture going to consider us? Jesus says by this shall all people know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another. In the midst of the world, in the midst of our present culture, Jesus is giving a right to the world. Upon his authority he gives the world the right to judge whether you and I are born-again Christians, on the basis of our observable love toward all Christians. That's pretty frightening. Jesus turns to the world and says, "I've something to say to you. On the basis of my authority, I give you a right: you may judge whether or not an individual is a Christian on the basis of the love they show to all true Christians." In other words, if people come up to us and cast in our teeth the judgment that we are not Christians because we have not shown love toward other Christians, we must understand that they are only exercising a prerogative which Jesus gave them. And we must not get angry. If people say, "You don't love other Christians," we must go home, get down on our knees, and ask God whether or not what they say is true. And if it is, then they have a right to have said it.

## Praying The Passage

- Spend some time pondering how Jesus and the Father are glorified in Jesus' obedient march to the cross (vv. 31-32). Praise God for the glory of Jesus' obedience and death, the glory of his loving submission to the Father, and the glory of God's sovereign plan unfolding in John's Gospel.
- Confess those petty things that divide us as Christians and bring dishonor to the name of Christ. Ponder how Christ has loved us while we were yet sinners (v. 8), and ask forgiveness for how we have failed to love one another in this way.
- Pray that we would love one another as Christ has loved us (vv. 34-35). Pray that divisions among God's people—in marriages, families, and churches—would be healed. Pray for unity among the churches of Santa Barbara and in the church worldwide that would draw the world to Jesus.





Notes



Study Four

# Way, Truth, Life

John 14:1-14

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

Between John 13:36-14:22, four different disciples ask Jesus for clarification.

Peter: *Lord where are you going?... Why can I not follow you now?* (13:36-37)

Thomas: *How can we know the way?* (14:5)

Philip: *Show us the Father* (14:8)

Judas: *How is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?* (14:22)

If you find yourself a bit perplexed in this section, you are in good company! Write down any questions you have as you read these verses.





In verses 1-4, Jesus is speaking comforting words to distressed friends. How can Jesus' promises in these verses help our hearts not to be troubled when we are going through distressing circumstances? Try to be specific.

Can you think of a difficult time you went through when these promises were precious to you? Are there people in your homegroup or other loved ones who are going through tough times? How can these words of Jesus provide comfort and encouragement?

How should Jesus' promise that he is going to prepare a (heavenly) place for us change the way we view our present *place* in this world? How does Christian faith change our perspective towards our homes? Our money? Our jobs? Our health? Our marital status?

In John 14:6 we find one of Jesus' most memorable claims. Why does Jesus use the words *way*, *truth*, and *life* together here? How does each word speak assurance to disconcerted disciples who have just been told Jesus is going away? How do they challenge those who are looking for God without respect to Jesus?

WAY

TRUTH

LIFE

Note that Jesus does not show us the way to God. He *is* the way to God. This makes Jesus completely different from all other religious leaders and founders. As one commentator puts it,

This is one of the high points of John's Christology. Jesus is not simply a religious teacher or guide, nor is he simply the means to some other destination. He is also the end, the goal. He is the One in whom God can be found. The exhaustive and exclusive nature of this astonishing claim cannot be missed. (Burge, p.393)

In our age of religious pluralism, which holds that all religious convictions are equally valid, such a claim can be downright offensive. Is this a tough pill for you to swallow? How does this impact the way you share (or don't share your faith)?

Make a list of the things Jesus tells us about his relationship to the Father in these 14 verses.

We read in verse 12, *whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.* What does this mean? Have you done *greater works* than Jesus? Does this cause you to question your faith? Reflect on Pastor John Piper's answer to this question:

What are the "greater works" that you will do — all of you? You will receive the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the crucified and risen Christ. Before the resurrection of Jesus, nobody in the history of the world had ever done that, not even Jesus. And in the power of that absolutely new experience — the indwelling of the crucified and risen Christ — your works of love and your message of life in union with Christ, will point people to the glory of the risen Son of God, and you will be the instrument of their forgiveness on the basis of the finished work of Christ (John 20:23). This will be new. This will be greater than Jesus' earthly miracles, because this is what he came to accomplish by his death and resurrection.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/doing-the-works-of-jesus-and-greater-works>



What do verses 12-14 teach us about prayer? Does this mean that anything you say before "...In Jesus' name, amen" he will do? If not, what does it mean to pray "in Jesus' name"? How do the following phrases and the corresponding Bible passages impact how we understand what we read here about prayer?

*...because I am going to the Father.* (14:12) See also Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:23-25.

*...that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* (14:13) See also Matthew 6:9-10.

How does the fact that Jesus is at the Father's side impact your prayer life? Share with your homegroup some examples of bold and expectant prayers for God to be glorified in your life and in the world.

Try to sum up what John (and Jesus!) wants us to learn in this passage. How might you apply this passage to your daily Christian life?

## Praying The Passage

- Consider that Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life (v. 6), is the answer to all of our longings and all of our questions! Consider that he is also the balm for our troubled hearts (v. 1). Glorify and thank the Son for these things. Expand your praise to include the Father, as you marvel at the reciprocal relationship between Father and Son (vv. 7-11).
- Lay your own troubles and those of your homegroup before God the Father and God the Son (v. 1). Consider that this passage follows Christ's prediction of Peter's betrayal (13:35)! Jesus is therefore bigger than our circumstances and our failures. Encourage one another in prayer, as you remember your secure place in God's house and the certainty of Christ's return (vv. 2-3).
- Consider that Jesus invites us to *ask for anything in my name*. Spend some time asking God, in Jesus' name, for the fullness of God in the church and the expansion of his church into the world!

## Notes





# Jesus, The Spirit and the Father

John 14:15-24

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

One of the reoccurring themes in the passage is the essential link between love and obedience (w. 15, 21, 23). John Calvin notes,

The reason why he so frequently reminds the disciples of this is, that they may not turn aside from this object [obeying his commands]; for there is nothing to which we are more prone than to slide into a carnal affection, so as to love something else than Christ under the name of Christ. (Calvin, p.96)

In other words, we can confuse truly loving Christ with affection for something else that we associate with Jesus. What *something else* might really be the object of our love if we claim to love Jesus but are not concerned with obedience?





What has Jesus commanded his disciples to do? Write down as many as you can think of in the space below.

Look at verse 16. What word do you find in your Bible?

*I will ask the Father and he will give you another \_\_\_\_\_...*

The Greek word is *parakletos*<sup>1</sup> and it is rendered many different ways in English translations. Bruce Milne explains,

The translators and commentators offer a range of equivalents including 'counsellor' (NIV), 'helper' (GNB, 'comforter' (KJV), and 'advocate' (NEB). Perhaps the most important consideration is that expressed in verse 16: ... *give you ANOTHER Counselor*. The Spirit will fulfill a role parallel to the role Jesus had fulfilled to this point; he is 'another Christ'. Such is the gift of the departed Jesus. (Milne, p. 214)

How does thinking of the Holy Spirit as *another Christ* help you understand the person and work of the Holy Spirit?

Earlier in John 14, Jesus claimed to be *the truth*. Now he calls this other Paraclete *the Spirit of truth*. What is the significance of this?

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<sup>1</sup> The word *parakletos* is used five times in the New Testament – four times here in John's Gospel to refer to the Spirit and one time in 1 John 2:1 where it refers to Jesus.



In verse 18 Jesus says, *I will come to you*. What is he talking about? His return from the dead on Easter Sunday? The giving of the Holy Spirit?<sup>2</sup> His second coming at the end of history?

Compare this to 14:3 and 14:23 where we find very similar words. Are these verses talking about the same *coming*? What clues from the surrounding context lead you to this conclusion?

In verse 18 Jesus tells the disciples they will not be left as *orphans*. In the world of that day there were no public schools or social services. The plight of an orphan was stark. They were deprived of things like guidance, provision and protection. Use the chart below to help you think through how Jesus met, and then the Holy Spirit meets, these needs.

	Jesus	Holy Spirit
Guidance		
Provision		
Protection		



<sup>2</sup> Note John 20:22. In John's Gospel, the return of Jesus at Easter and the giving of the Holy Spirit are closely related.



What do we learn about the interrelatedness of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in these verses? Taking this section along with last weeks' text, how does John 14:1-24 contribute to our understanding of the Trinity?

Jesus is concerned not only to show the intimacy between himself and the Father and the Spirit. He points to how the disciples will share in this intimacy as well. Which members of the Trinity are said to dwell in Jesus' disciples?

Why does Jesus say this to his fearful disciples? What difference does this make to you?

### Praying The Passage

- Ponder and thank God for the astonishing blessings that are ours as we enter into a relationship of obeying Christ as Lord. We are given the Holy Spirit to be with us forever (v. 16), we are invited into the intimate fellowship of the Trinity (v. 20), we are assured of the deep love of both Father and Son for us (v. 20), and we are assured of eternal life through Jesus (v. 19).
- Confess those things that tempt you to disobedience, perhaps because the passing pleasures they offer seem better than the staggering promises of this text.
- Pray for one another to grow in obedience and to experience increasing intimacy and joy with God the Son, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit! Pray this would spill out into the world and bring others into this fellowship.

# He Will Teach You All Things

John 14:25-31

The Holy Spirit is an oft-misunderstood (or maybe more awkwardly put: an *under*-understood) part of our theology as evangelicals. As one of his book titles, pastor and author Francis Chan called the third person of the Trinity *The Forgotten God*. We tend to leave the Holy Spirit to Pentecostals or our more charismatic-leaning friends. In doing so, we betray the mushiness of our thinking on the Trinity.<sup>1</sup>

But the Holy Spirit plays a central role in Jesus' teaching here in the Upper Room before his march to the cross. And more than that, we will see that the Holy Spirit plays a central role in our Christian lives after Christ's ascension.

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

Look back over our previous studies. How does this passage build on Jesus' teaching in the preceding passages? What themes or phrases are similar to things he has already taught?



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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent intro and primer to the Trinity (with especially helpful material on the Holy Spirit) see Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*. It is as humorous as it is encouraging!



As is common to John, his recording of Jesus' words is wandering and, at times, circular in its logic. Look over verses 25-29, and try to re-arrange them in a way that helps you understand the point Jesus is making. (As a homegroup activity you may want to print each verse with the numbers omitted, cut them into strips, and as a group see if you can arrange them in a way that makes the most sense to people).

Re-read verses 27 and 28. Looming over the Upper Room Discourse is Jesus' departure to the Father. What does Jesus say to his disciples regarding his leaving to the Father?

Jesus' words on peace are not just nice platitudes. What is the content or substance of the peace he gives? How have you experienced that peace?

Christ says his peace is *not as the world gives* (v. 27). What is the difference between Christ's peace and that which the world has to offer?

If we consider what lies ahead for the disciples (soon to be apostles), is it presumptuous for Jesus to command them to *not be afraid* and to *let not [their] hearts be troubled*? They will witness the arrest of Jesus, his interrogation, scourging, crucifixion and death. In Acts, they themselves will face persecution, imprisonment and martyrdom. How are we to understand Christ's command in light of this? What does this teach us about the peace that Christ gives?

Get personal now. How does the disciples' experience impact your understanding or experience of Christ's peace in your own life?

Look again at the Helper in verse 26. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit from this verse? What are some of the things the Spirit will do? How have you experienced this work of the Spirit in your life?

These are just a few of the many works that the Holy Spirit does for us! Do we talk about the Spirit, rejoice in the Spirit, or depend on the Spirit, as we should? What are ways that we might cultivate this more in our Christian lives and in our church?





Finally, look at verse 29. What is the end result of Christ's teaching, and the Spirit's enabling remembrance?

Respond to the following quote from Martin Luther's shorter catechism:

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith.<sup>2</sup>

## Praying The Passage

- Acknowledge the sovereignty and grace of God in the coming of Christ, in the timing of his departure (v. 29), in the impotence of Satan when faced with Jesus (v. 30), and in his amazing gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 26). Marvel also and praise God for the wonderful harmony between Father and Son (v. 31).
- Pray for more of the Holy Spirit in each other's lives, recognizing this is a prayer God loves to answer (Luke 11:13)! Pray for the Spirit to fill us with wisdom and the knowledge of God, and to give us supernatural peace (v. 27) that overwhelms all our troubles.
- Consider repeating the first sentence of verse 27 as a litany, as various members of your group lay before God places of trouble in their own lives, or in the lives of other saints locally and globally. *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you.*

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, "Small Catechism." *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert. [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000], Third Article to the Creed, 355-356.

# Abide in Me

John 15:1-11

First century culture surrounding Jerusalem was heavily agrarian. For this reason, Jesus bases many of his stories and illustrations on generally understood agricultural practices. Each of the gospels records Jesus using farming metaphors to illustrate truths of the gospel. Here we find Jesus using the example of a vine to explain the relationship between God the Father, Jesus himself, and us – both believers and non-believers.

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

Look at this passage again. Compare John 15:1-11 in a couple of other Bible versions (ESV, NIV, NLT, and *The Message* are good comparisons). What words or phrases vary? How do these inform your understanding of the passage?





Whether you are artistic or not, make an effort to draw a picture below of the vine and the two types of branches as described in verses 1-6. If needed, draw more than one picture. (Consider awarding a prize for "best picture" and "worst picture" in homegroup!)

Now, with words, describe the two types of branches. According to this passage, what is the relationship between the vine, the branches, and the fruit? How does the vinedresser tend to the two different types of branches, and why?

The word *abide* (*remain, stay joined, dwell*) is used repeatedly in verses 4-10. According to Jesus, who *abides* and what do they *abide in*? What does it mean to *abide*?

Read verses 7-11. What does Jesus say in these verses about love and obedience in relation to abiding in him? Jesus says, *If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love* (v. 10), or, *If you obey my commands you will remain in my love* (NIV). Share some concrete examples.



Think about what Jesus means by *words*, *commandments* and *love* in verses 7-11. Reflect on your life and try to identify where this resonates. Do you abide in these things? Share an example or two with your homegroup. If you can't put your finger on examples, let others in your group help you!

According to the ESV Study Bible notes for John 15:4-6,

to *Abide in me* means to continue in a daily, personal relationship characterized by trust, prayer, obedience (see v. 10) and joy.... The person who *does not abide in me* is an unbeliever who does not have a personal faith in Christ.

Note that this passage does not provide an example of a branch being connected to the source of life and then being cut off. The branches described by Jesus are either connected or not, alive on the vine or not.

In this illustration of the vine, the believer is the branch. Practically speaking, what does that mean in your relationship with Jesus? Are you a vibrant productive branch? A live branch, but hanging on by a just few fibers? Are you the branch lying on the ground, not yet connected to the life sustenance offered by the vine? Using words that fit this metaphor, describe your relation to Jesus who is the vine, the source of life. How do you abide or not abide in him?





Reflect on the branch you described yourself to be. Jesus is the source of life; are you well nourished in your relationship with him? What does Jesus provide that causes or would cause you to grow and produce fruit? How might you improve your spiritual diet and eat more healthily?

Take a few moments at the end of your homegroup discussion to jot down your main takeaway. After studying and discussing this passage, gaining from what others may have learned, what stands out that might encourage your discipleship?

## Praying The Passage

- Recognize what a privilege it is to be united to Christ as a branch is to the vine! Meditate upon, rejoice in (v. 11), and thank God once again for the intimate relationship he gives us with Christ. Rejoice that Jesus loves us in the same way that the Father has loved the Son (v. 9).
- Confess the ways in which we have failed to obey his commands, Confess the sin of self-sufficiency that plagues the Western church, reflecting our profound ignorance of the fact that *apart from me you can do nothing* (v. 5).
- Pray that God's people might remain intimately connected to the vine, and bear much fruit. Lay before God everything we do—our parenting, our jobs, our schoolwork, our chores, our homegroups, our administration, our praying—asking that they would be done not in our own strength, but in the strength from the vine (v. 5). Pray this for one another, for our staff and elders, and for the ministries and missionaries we support!

# The Commandment to Love

John 15:12-17

In our last portion of John, Jesus addresses what it is to abide in him, to stay connected to him for our life nourishment. He is the vine, we are the branches, and without being connected to Jesus, we cannot live. At the end he says that his words, his commands, are what we must abide in, remain in, hold tight to. Our passage today picks up as Jesus begins to explain to those listening what his commands are.

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

Read John 15:12-17 again. What contrasts are listed? What themes carry on from Study Seven? What is clear, what is confusing?





John records Jesus' command to us in verse 12. Read this in as many Bible translation as you can find. What do you learn by looking at various translations of this verse?

Jesus draws a distinction between a friendship relationship and a servant-master relationship. A servant was typically told what to do, he was the means by which a task was done, but rarely knew the purpose of his work.

In verses 13-15 how does Jesus describe his relationship with the disciples?

Jesus continues his explanation of their relationship in verse 16 by pointing out that they are friends because he chose them. The disciples listening to this were indeed chosen, one or two at a time, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. They were chosen intentionally and for a purpose.

Verse 16 outlines the process from their choosing to the point where they pray and receive. List the steps in this progression.

When you consider your relationship with Jesus, what kind of relationship would you liken it to? Master-servant? Friends? A distant uncle? Or...? Take the next step. What about seeing yourself as chosen and having a purpose in your life as a believer? How does this all fit together for you? How would you like to develop this relationship, or are you content?

Twice in chapter 15 Jesus says that if the disciples ask for something, it will be done, and they will receive what they ask for. Look at these verses in context. What is said about the disciples' lives in these passages? What comes first?

15:7

15:16

In Study Seven we examined the metaphor of the vine: branches connected to the vine produce fruit. How does your understanding of bearing fruit and abiding (15:1-11) help you to understand verse 16?

How does this passage inform your understanding of and practice of prayer?

Consider again the first and last sentences of this passage. The last sentence begins, *These things I command you...* To determine what *these things* are, we must start back at 15:1 where Jesus begins this teaching. What is the main point he is trying to get across?





Think about your homegroup, other significant Christian relationships you have, and your involvement in SBCC. Do you love those around you as Jesus has loved you? In practical terms, what does this mean? How might you love your fellow believers better?

Take a few moments at the end of your homegroup discussion to jot down your main takeaway. After studying and discussing this passage, gaining from what others may have learned, what stands out that might encourage your discipleship?

## Praying The Passage

- Acknowledge that we can only love because Christ first loved us (1 John 4:19). Consider how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, having chosen us (v. 16), laid down his life for us (v. 13), and given us the enormous privilege of being not only his servants, but also his friends (v. 15)!
- Consider naming individual members of your homegroup, and thanking God for how Christ has chosen them, loved them, and called them his friends.
- Remembering that the Father gives us whatever we ask in Jesus' name (v. 16), pray that we might lay down our lives for one another as commanded in verse 17. Pray for husbands and wives to lay down their lives for one other, for friends and roommates to lay down their lives for one another, for parents to lay down their lives for their children, for adult children to lay down their lives for their aging parents, and for the shepherds of God's flock to lay down their lives for the sheep.

## On Being Hated

John 15:18–16:4

The Christian faith is often “marketed” in North America as something that will make life better. Jesus is something we add to our already good lives to enhance them further still. But in John 15:18–16:4 Jesus’ followers are promised they will be hated, persecuted, and even killed. Remember, these are among the last words of Jesus to his disciples. To borrow a line from our own times, he never promises a rose garden.

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

What do you think Jesus’ purpose was in telling his disciples they may be persecuted? Why do you think John included this in his summary of Jesus’ farewell discourse? What does John want the reader to learn?

In verse 19, Jesus makes a sharp distinction between being *in the world* and being *of the world*. The difference will determine whether we are *loved* or *hated* by the world.





First, what does Jesus mean by *world*? Examine a few of the references to the *world* in John's Gospel. How would you summarize the way John uses the word *world*...

1:10

1:29

3:13, 19

7:7

14:17, 27

14:30

16:8, 20, 33

17:6, 9

According to verse 19, why are believers not *of the world*?

In what ways do you see yourself as *not* of this world? What are the ways in which Christ has called you out of the world?



A generation ago there was much concern in the evangelical church regarding *worldliness*. Evangelicals were fearful about becoming *worldly* and the distinction between the *world* and the *church* was fairly clear. What happened to this distinction? Is it still there with a different vocabulary? Or have evangelicals become too complacent regarding being *of the world*?

What are ways that our generation is being called to be uniquely distinct from the world?

Who is the least worldly person you know? Describe? How can your homegroup learn from this example?

In verse 20 Jesus quotes himself. Where do we find the original in John's Gospel? (Hint: see John 13) How is the emphasis of this verse different from Jesus' original statement?





Look at verses 18-25 as a whole. They are somewhat repetitive. Jesus is saying, *the world will hate you because it hated me. The world hated me because of my words.* Revisit these verses. What else does Jesus say about the hatred of the world toward him? What does it mean to hate Jesus?

Again, look over these verses as a unit. How could you summarize Jesus' teaching to his disciples? What does this passage mean to us living at the beginning of the twenty-first century in an increasingly secularized society?

What has been the cost to you personally of following Jesus? Do you expect this cost to increase in the future?

What can we do, as a church, to prepare to be treated with hostility or even outright persecution?

How do you think you would respond to the intense persecution Jesus mentions in these verses?

In verses 26-27 Jesus prepares his disciples for persecution, implying that they will, indeed, endure the coming ordeal. What assurance do these verses give to those enduring persecution?

As we finish this study, consider and discuss two quotations:

Peter Kusmic, a Croatian evangelical leader, indicts the Western church with the following.

So much popular Western evangelical religiosity is so shallow and selfish. It promises so much and demands so little. It offers success, personal happiness, peace of mind, material prosperity; but it hardly speaks of repentance, sacrifice, self-denial, holy lifestyle and willingness to die for Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Respond to the following statement by Dr. Michael Green:

You cannot be the disciple of a crucified saviour and have a ball all your life. It simply cannot be done.<sup>2</sup>



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1 Peter Kusmic, "How to Teach the Truth of the Gospel," *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes*, 1990, p. 200.

2 Unpublished lecture at Regent College, 10/93



## Praying The Passage

- Praise God that we have been chosen and no longer belong to this world (v. 19). Thank him for the ways in which you have experienced both freedom from the world's empty ways, as well as opposition to your faith. Consider that the apostles rejoiced to suffer disgrace for the name (Acts 5:41) and that we are commanded by Jesus to do the same (Matthew 5:10-12)!
- Confess for yourself and for the wider church the ways in which we have sought to fit into this world, rather than living as aliens and strangers in it. Confess where we have embraced Christ's triumphs but failed to embrace his sufferings (v. 20-21 and Philippians 3:10). Confess where we have feared men instead of God.
- For each of your homegroup members, pray for Spirit-filled boldness to testify of Christ (v. 27) and to please God rather than men. Pray for the persecuted church worldwide to be informed and strengthened by this passage.

## Notes

# The Conviction of the Holy Spirit

John 16:4b-15

In Study 6, we saw some of Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit. Look back to that study and reflect again on the things that the Holy Spirit does in the life of the Christian. In our passage this week, we will see some further explanation on the work of the Holy Spirit, or *Helper* as he is often called in this part of John.

We may be confused or tempted to be negligent when it comes to our understanding and gratitude for what the Holy Spirit does in our life. But much is lost if we ignore the third person of the Triune God. Before you read, stop and pray that the Spirit would work even now on your heart as you dig into God's Word!

Read John 16:1-15. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

Again, Jesus sets the backdrop for this teaching on the Holy Spirit with the shadow of his departure. In verse 6, he says that because he has told them he is leaving *sorrow has filled* their hearts. But then in verse 7, he drops another big surprise. What comfort to their sorrow does he offer?





Many Christians have commented at times that things would be so much better if they could just have Jesus with them in person. Oh, how their prayer life, devotions and times of worship would change if only Jesus was there next to them! But what does Jesus say about this? Do we believe it was to our *advantage* that he went away? Why or why not?

Do we cherish the *Helper's* presence with us like we would Christ himself? How can we grow in this?

From verse 8 on, we get Jesus' teaching on why *the Helper* coming is such good news. What are the three things *the Helper* will do? (Hint: in the ESV you can fill in the blank, *He will \_\_\_\_\_*).

Let's break each of these down. Jesus begins in verses 8-11 discussing how the *Helper will convict the world*. Commentators note that this is best understood as legal conviction rather than intellectual convincing. A helpful synonym is *expose*: the *Helper* will expose who was sinful, who was righteous and who is really judged. Why will each be exposed? What reasons does Jesus give?

Notice the irony here. Jesus is about to be tried, convicted and judged on the Cross; the world and its ruler think they are triumphing over Christ. Jesus, however, turns it around on the world and says the Helper will show that the very opposite is true: Satan and the world are judged through the cross!

This calls attention to the fact that reality is not always as it seems—especially when it comes to the values of the world. The Holy Spirit exposes the world's values to be off the mark and even upside down. In what ways have you seen this to be true in our culture? How is it encouraging to know that Jesus has been vindicated over against the world and its values?

We are also told that *he will guide [us] into all truth* (v. 13). In what ways does the Holy Spirit do this? What means (ordinary or extraordinary) does he use?

How have you experienced this aspect of the Holy Spirit's work in your life?

Finally, in verses 14 and 15, we are told that the Holy Spirit *will glorify* Christ. This is part of Jesus' word of comfort and encouragement. Why is this work of the Holy Spirit good news?





Consider and respond to the following quotes:

It is ever the Holy Spirit's work to turn our eyes away from self to Jesus; but Satan's work is just the opposite of this, for he is constantly trying to make us regard ourselves instead of Christ.... We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what *Jesus is*, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul. If we would at once overcome Satan and have peace with God, it must be by *looking unto Jesus*.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot choose *what* we love, but always love what seems desirable to us. Thus we will only change what we love when something proves itself to be more desirable to us than what we already love. I will, then, always love sin and the world until I truly sense that Christ is better. And this is what the Spirit does in us: he makes us taste and see that the Lord is good, supremely good, and thus he causes us to desire him!<sup>2</sup>

Kevin DeYoung summarizes,

The Spirit is a light to us in three ways. (1) He exposes sin so that we can recognize it and turn away. (2) He illumines the Word so that we can understand its meaning and grasp its implications. (3) He takes the veil away so that we can see the glory of Christ and become what we behold. Or to put it another way, the Spirit sanctifies by revealing sin, revealing truth, and revealing glory.<sup>3</sup>

As we asked in study #6 on the Holy Spirit, how can we talk about the Spirit, rejoice in the Spirit, or depend on the Spirit more in our Christian lives and in our church?

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1 Charles Spurgeon, "Morning, June 28," in *Morning and Evening* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956).

2 Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 101.

3 Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in our Holiness* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 82.



Close in prayer as a homegroup, rejoicing in the gift of the Holy Spirit and our *advantage* now that he has come!

## Praying The Passage

- Praise God that in his wisdom he has taken Christ—God with us—away from us for a time, that we might receive the Holy Spirit—God in us (v. 7)! Thank God for the ministry of the Spirit in the church and in the world, as taught in this passage.
- Pray for the increased ministry of the Holy Spirit to expose sin in the church, to illuminate the word, to reveal the glory of Christ, and to make us more like Christ! Pray for one another by name and for the elders and staff of our church.
- Pray for the increased ministry of the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (v. 8). Pray for non-believing family and friends to become aware of and repent of their sins. Pray the same for people groups that have yet to respond to or hear the gospel.

## Notes





## From Sorrow to Joy

John 16:16-24

A constant theme of John 13-16 has been Jesus' attempt to prepare his disciples for his death on the cross and departure from the world. In John 16:16-24 Jesus again brings up this looming reality. Because of his compassionate love, Jesus is preparing them for the sorrow that he knows they will soon experience.

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

The central question of this passage is, what does Jesus mean when he says, *a little while*? How many times does Jesus say, *a little while*?

What are some of the options that this phrase—*a little while*— could be referring to? Twice he says, *you will see me* (16:17,19). When will they see him again? Of these various options which one makes the most sense to you in light of Jesus' teaching?





Don't miss the humor in this dialogue. The disciples are a bit confused as to what in the world Jesus is talking about. So a few of them have a discussion off to the side asking each other, *Do you understand what he is saying?* Jesus is aware of their confusion and conversation so he intervenes to give them some help. What comfort does Jesus offer?

In verses 21-22 Jesus uses an analogy of a woman in labor and the resulting birth of the baby. The pain, anguish and sorrow that accompany labor is followed by the joy of a new baby. This analogy was used frequently in the Old Testament to illustrate the pain Israel (or a person) would have to go through before joy and blessing could be experienced. (See Isaiah 26:16-21.) How might this illustration have helped prepare the disciples for what was coming? Do you find any comfort in the analogy? How?

In verse 22 Jesus looks forward to a time of joy and rejoicing that will follow their sorrow. He pointedly says that *no one will take your joy from you*. Why is it that this joy will be permanent?

Ponder the relationship between *sorrow* (suffering, pain, grief) and *joy* (comfort, gladness, delight) in your life as a disciple of Jesus. How have you experienced both *sorrow* and *joy* in your journey of faith with Christ? How does this passage help you to understand the relationship between *sorrow* and *joy*?

Our passage concludes with two verses (22-23) that speak about the disciple's prayer life. Here we are instructed to pray in the name of Jesus. Is ending a prayer *in Jesus name* just a formality that can be employed when we feel like it and jettisoned at other times? What does it mean to pray *in Jesus name*?

What is the relationship between asking God for something in prayer and the fullness of our joy spoken of in verse 24? Are you hesitant to *ask* and *receive*? Why?

This is a good time to think about your prayer life. How would you evaluate how you pray? D.L. Moody, the famous 19th century evangelist and pastor, pondered what would provoke in him the sense of *wonder* when he arrived in heaven. He said, *Next to the wonder of seeing my Savior will be, I think, the wonder that I made so little use of the power of prayer.*<sup>1</sup> Do you think you will feel this way?

What are one or two implications from this passage that you can apply to your life this week?



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<sup>1</sup> NIV Prayer Devotional Bible, p. 1308.



## Praying The Passage

- Praise God that he is the one who turns grief into joy, as he did in the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise him for turning that which was intended for evil (the Cross) into the salvation of the world! Remember ways in which he has demonstrated his power and faithfulness to you by turning your grief into joy.
- Pray for those places of grief in your life right now. Perhaps it is grieving over friends and family who have not yet responded to the gospel or been raised from death to life.
- Consider the staggering promises of God's hearing and answering our prayers in verse 23-24! Act on these promises by asking God for things in his name. Pray for God's kingdom to come and his will to be done, and for God to make our joy complete as he answers our prayers!

## Notes

# I Have Overcome the World

John 16:25-33

In John's Gospel the term *hour* (16:25, 32) takes on special theological meaning pointing to Jesus' death and glorification when he will return to be with his *Father* in heaven. In his impending crucifixion, the *hour* has now come. This is the end of Jesus' mission on earth. Jesus takes this opportunity to remind his disciples one last time of his unique relationship to God the Father. As Jesus departs, however, his disciples will still be in the world. He is preparing them for the inevitable trouble they will face.

Read this passage several times. What stands out in these verses?

What does Jesus (or John in some instances) want us to learn?

What questions do you have of this passage?

During their time with Jesus, the disciples were often confused and failed to understand what he was saying. Jesus' teaching was, at times, cryptic and obscure. The disciples seem somewhat relieved in our passage that Jesus is speaking plainly. What is it that they now seem to understand more clearly?

Where does Jesus say he is going?





What does Jesus say will become of his disciples?

What does Jesus say about his unique relationship to the *Father*?

Jesus has never been subtle in telling his followers about the reality of their life in this world. He told them plainly: *If the world hates you keep in mind that it hated me first* (John 15:18). He knows that with his departure the disciples will face *tribulation*.

New Testament commentator Gary Burge points out that, *John uses the term world eighty times, and fully one-third of those describe the world as a place of unbelief and conflict.* (Burge, p. 447)

And yet Jesus tells his disciples to *take heart, I have overcome the world* (16:33). In what sense has Jesus *overcome the world*? How does this practically comfort and encourage you?

How do you understand the Christian's relationship with the *world*?

Verse 33 highlights a practical tension in the Christian life. While Jesus promises his followers they will experience *peace* because of their relationship with him, they will at the same time have *tribulation* (NIV= *trouble*, NLT= *many trials and sorrows*). How can you combine the victory and peace that is found in Jesus with the troubles and sorrows that accompany life in this world?



Describe how this tension has worked itself out in your life.

How should we respond to the Christian who says; *Come to Jesus and all of your troubles will be taken care of?*

What *tribulations, sorrows, trials* are you currently experiencing that are a challenge in your spiritual life?

Jesus instructs his disciples who will experience these *tribulations* to *take heart*. What does it mean to *take heart*? How do you *take heart*? Are you currently *taking heart* in your sorrows?

Do you feel like you are spiritually prepared for the troubles that Jesus promises will accompany life in this world? Do you have a faith that is ready for the ups and the downs of life?





## Praying The Passage

- Thank God the Father for your identity as his beloved child (v. 27)! Ponder and thank God that he hears and answers our prayers in Jesus' name (v. 26).
- Confess that, like the disciples, we are slow to believe (v. 31). Confess the inconsistency of our faith, at times welling up into confident confessions (v. 30), and at other times weak in the face of trials (v. 31).
- Pray for one another that you may find Christ's peace in this world of trouble (v. 33), as we ponder that Jesus our Friend and Savior has overcome the world. Consider singing together the chorus (or the entire hymn!) from the classic hymn *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*.

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

## Notes