

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 24TH-25TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE COUNSELOR (JOHN 16:1-15)

As Jesus approaches the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples on the night before His crucifixion, He speaks to them words of encouragement and hope.

- Jesus' words are also grounded in reality—these men are going to suffer, face hardship, experience fear, pain, loss, and difficulty.
- Their sorrow would only be temporary and would give way to joy.

There was a time coming for the disciples when they would be expelled from Jewish life and community because of Jesus (vs. 2).

- In fact, some people will even believe that they are serving God by killing the disciples of Jesus (Acts 9, Saul of Tarsus).
- Jesus warns them of these things because He doesn't want the disciples to "stumble" when this happens to them (vs. 1).

The temptation when we encounter opposition, pushback, or persecution is to stumble, go astray, and back down from our testimony in Jesus.

- Jesus has warned us that being excluded/excommunicated and being targeted are normative parts of being a Christian (vs. 4).
- The opposition against Jesus' disciples stems from the world's rejection of Christ (vs. 3).

Jesus had said He was going away, and Peter and Thomas had asked Him questions about it (Jn. 13:36; Jn. 14:5).

- The questions they asked seemed to be asked not so they could understand the mission and work of Jesus, but to simply find out how it impacted them (vs. 5).
- The sorrow of Jesus leaving them kept them from seeing the bigger picture (vs. 6).

Remarkably, Jesus tells the disciples that His absence is actually for their benefit (vs. 7).

- If Jesus didn't leave, the Counselor (Holy Spirit) couldn't come, and the Holy Spirit's presence within the hearts and lives of the disciples was better than Jesus walking alongside them.
- The Spirit will be sent by Jesus to live in the disciples of Jesus as they continue the mission of Jesus to call other disciples to follow Jesus.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE WORLD (VS. 8-11)

The Holy Spirit will "convict": He will correct, convince, or "redefine" the world's understanding of three of the most basic notions of spirituality: sin, righteousness, and judgment.

- How does the Holy Spirit speak? The Holy Spirit will speak through the disciples as they boldly proclaim and preach the Word of God (Acts 2).

Sin: the world is wrong about sin because the greatest sin is unbelief and rejection of Jesus (vs. 9). Righteousness: the world is wrong about righteousness because true righteousness isn't based on human performance, it's a result of right relationship with the Father, which only comes through Jesus (vs. 10).

Judgment: the world is wrong about judgment because Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross will result in the condemnation of Satan, the prince of this world (vs. 11).

- This judgment of sin and Satan on the cross means there will be a final, ultimate judgment between God and all who are rebels against Him. The Holy Spirit reveals to the world that Jesus has satisfied the judgment for all who stand condemned!

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN DISCIPLES (VS. 12-15)

1. The Holy Spirit reveals truth progressively (vs. 12). God is patient with us and teaches us truths as we need to know them.
2. The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth (vs. 13). The Holy Spirit leads us to the truth we need and helps us understand God's Word applied to our lives and personal situations.
3. The Holy Spirit equips and prepares us supernaturally for our mission from Jesus (vs. 13b). We don't know what is to come and what we need: but God does, and He prepares us.
4. The Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus and speak truth from God the Father (vs. 14-15). The Holy Spirit's purpose in our lives is to reveal Jesus.

SORROW TURNED TO JOY (JOHN 16:16-22)

In a matter of hours ("in a little while"), the disciples would no longer see Jesus because He'd be dead.

- But just three days later ("again in a little while"), the disciples would see Him once more because He'd come back from the dead (vs. 16).
- The disciples are genuinely perplexed—what is Jesus talking about (vs. 17-18)?

Jesus responds to their questions in verses 19-22.

- Over the course of the next few days, the world will celebrate Jesus' death while the disciples weep and mourn (vs. 20).
- But when Jesus is resurrected, their sorrow will be reversed and turn to joy.
- A woman giving birth to a child experiences the same reversal: first, there is unspeakable pain, and then her sorrow turns to joy (vs. 21).

In life, sorrow and joy are connected: our greatest joys often come out of our deepest moments of sadness.

- There's no skipping sorrow to get to joy; you can't get the newborn baby without morning sickness, swollen ankles, contractions, and the pain of labor.
- You can't get the joy of resurrection without the pain and sorrow of the crucifixion.

You can't get the glorious joy and beauty of Heaven without first faithfully enduring the trials, suffering, and pain of the life of discipleship.

- Many Christians want the crown without the cross, glory without suffering, and reward without sacrifice.
- When we see Jesus face-to-face, we will experience an unspeakable joy that can never be taken from us (vs. 22).

COURAGE (JOHN 16:23-33)

After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples will no longer be able to physically turn to Jesus and ask Him to meet a need.

- Instead, they have the privilege of going directly to the Father in Jesus' name and asking Him for whatever they need (vs. 23).
- The disciples hadn't yet prayed in the name of Jesus, but Jesus promises when they do, the Father will answer them (vs. 24).

Within this amazing promise is a very important constraining guideline: What we ask for must be asked in Jesus' name.

- Asking for something "in Jesus' name" is not an incantation or mantra or tagline, it's asking for what will advance His Kingdom and purposes in our lives.
- When we're abiding in Him and living for His Kingdom, we can ask and expect to receive so that our joy may be complete!

On the night before He went to the cross, Jesus spoke to them about His death, resurrection, and ascension using "figures of speech," but there was coming a day when Jesus would speak to them plainly about the Father (vs. 25).

- Acts 1:3 tells us that after the resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days with His disciples teaching and speaking to them about the Kingdom of God.

After Jesus goes to the cross, open access to God the Father will be given to all who come through Jesus the Son (vs. 26-27).

- It won't just be Jesus who has a relationship with Jesus' disciples, the Father Himself loves those who love and believe in Jesus.
- Verse 28 has been called by some as the perfect summary of Jesus' identity and mission in John's Gospel.

The light bulb finally comes on for the disciples!

- Their doubt turns to faith as they profess that they finally believe everything Jesus has said about Himself and they don't need to question Him anymore (vs. 29-30).
- It only took them 3.5 years of listening to Him teach and watching Him work, but sometimes the seeds of true, genuine, saving faith take time to take root and spring up.

THE 18-INCH JOURNEY.

Knowing God and knowing about God are not the same things.

- Truth in our head is good, but Jesus meant for the truth in our mind to move to our heart so that our affections are stirred for God and faith becomes rooted in the depths of our soul.
- Light bulb moments of spiritual revelation are supernatural works of God: Ask God for it if you've not experienced it!

The disciples are confident that they know and understand everything, but Jesus sees the actual maturity of their faith.

- We are usually not as strong as we think we are.
- The hour is coming when each one of them will be scattered out of fear and abandon Jesus (vs. 31-32).
- Yet Jesus won't be alone because the Father will still be with Him.

In this world we will have suffering: trouble, trials, persecution, opposition, and pain are part of the human experience and especially part of the life of Christian discipleship.

- Even amidst our suffering, we can have peace and courage because Jesus has overcome the world (vs. 33).
- Our suffering isn't permanent: it will give way eventually to unspeakable joy.

SO THAT YOU MAY HAVE PEACE (SHALOM).

- Shalom is a state of harmony, rest, wholeness, inner completeness, tranquility, and restoration/reconciliation of things that were lost or broken.
- Jesus offers this to His disciples on what is sure to be the most difficult, painful, and confusing 72 hours of their entire life.
- Jesus offers this to all His disciples.

PEACE (SHALOM) WITH GOD.

- Sin disrupted Shalom (Gen. 3), but the sacrifice of Jesus healed the rupture and closed the gap between us and God.
- If you've trusted in Jesus and His work for you on the cross, you have peace with God (Rom. 5:1).
- You have access to God the Father and access to the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life: all because of Jesus.

PEACE (SHALOM) WITH OTHERS AND WITHIN OURSELVES.

- Forgiving people are forgiving people, and loved people know how to love people.
- If you're at peace with God, you have freedom to love others without the requirement of them loving you back: even if they persecute you.
- If you're at peace with God, you have the freedom to view yourself as God views you (vs. 27).

PEACE (SHALOM) DESPITE SORROW.

- As a disciple of Jesus, in this world, you will have suffering and sorrow.
- We have peace and courage in the midst of our sorrow because we know it's not permanent and it is purposeful (2 Cor. 4:17-18).
- There's no skipping sorrow to get to joy; eternal reward requires earthly sacrifice and obedient discipleship. He gives us grace and peace!