

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST  
John 13:1-17

Intro: This is the beginning of one of the most wonderful passages in all of Scripture: John 13-17, usually referred to as The Upper Room Discourse (although not all of was given in the upper room where they observed the Passover, nor is it all discourse -- e.g., John 17, the Lord's prayer).

Request: Read it over and over during the weeks that we will be considering it together. Ask the Lord to write these truths upon your heart, to give you understanding of the things that the Lord is teaching here. It could easily mean the greatest time of blessing that we have had as individuals, or as a church!

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The Lord Jesus is only rarely referred to in Scripture as He is here in v. 15, as "an example."

It is never for salvation. It is never that He is an example to the world -- only and always for believers!

Cf. 1 Pet. 2:21 -- where the word is different from the word our Lord uses in John 13:15, although both basically contain the same idea.

We must avoid the false teaching of the liberals who make this a way of salvation, BUT we must also avoid the mistake of seeing nothing in this because a word is used which, by men, has been misused and misinterpreted.

Note: The Devil has seen fit that every precious doctrine of Scripture has been perverted in one way or another. Cf. the Fatherhood of God. And so we make the mistake of minimizing one of the greatest of all truths -- the fact that we who are redeemed are in God's family, and He is our heavenly Father! Let us not make this mistake of being forced to neglect truths because the ~~Enemy~~ misuses truth.

This example of Christ is basic to all of the teaching that follows in The Upper Room Discourse. We must learn this lesson well, and then continue to learn it.

The passage has three sections:

- I. What we might call -- A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES (vv. 1-3). These are truths that John gives us by special revelation, not things which were necessarily known by our Lord's apostles at this time.
- II. ~~THE~~ ACTION OF OUR LORD -- in washing the disciples' feet (vv. 4-11).
- III. THE TEACHING OF THE LORD -- about what He had just done (vv. 12-17).

Let me say (just in case some might be curious), I do not believe that this was intended by our Lord to be an ordinance of the Church -- along with baptism and the Lord's Supper. There are many of the Lord's people who do believe that this is an ordinance. I have two very dear aunts who, with their families, attend a church where this is the teaching. It certainly is not a point for us to break fellowship over it, but I personally do not believe that the Lord was here establishing a third ordinance. I believe that the main teaching has to do with the spiritual meaning of what our Lord did.

This morning, rather than take up the passage verse by verse, I want to take up the subject of the passage, THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST, and show, with the Lord's help and blessing, how the Lord was AN EXAMPLE to His disciples, and how it applies to us today. Tonight I want to return to this same passage and take up another aspect of the passage -- especially as it relates to the Apostle Peter. My subject tonight will be:

THE TEACHER AND HIS DISCIPLE (or, PUPIL)

or

THE LORD AND HIS SERVANT.

How is the Lord our Example? Let me mention four ways -- and then give you a wonderful promise to top it all off!

I. HE IS AN EXAMPLE TO US AS TO THE PEOPLE HE WAS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN.

Note the words in v. 1 -- "his own."

Have you not been impressed with the fact that as the Lord got closer to the hour of His death He moved away from the multitudes to be with the Twelve?

Note how this enters into His prayer in John 17. See vv. 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 24 -- plus the fact that the prayer was "not for the world," but for "his own."

In teaching Isaiah at MSB I first really discovered the meaning of those words found in Isa. 43:1,

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee,  
O Jacob,  
and he that formed thee, O Israel,  
Fear not: for I have redeemed thee,  
I have called thee by thy name;  
thou art mine."

Have we been impressed by this fact, for others who are the Lord's people, as well as for ourselves?

How much do the people of God generally figure into our daily lives?

II. HE IS AN EXAMPLE TO US IN HIS MOTIVATION FOR WHAT HE DID TO HIS DISCIPLES.

Look at v. 1 again: ". . . having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

The Lord has a special love for "his own" -- you know that, don't you?

This is John's way of saying what Jeremiah taught the people of God long before:

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying,  
Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:  
therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee"  
(Jer. 31:3).

How amazing that He would love us! And then to have this assurance that He will never stop loving us -- that He loves us "unto the end" -- without any break, or any change -- what greater truth can you find in the Word of God?

Cf. Rom. 8:35-39.

But note the application to those of us who know the Lord. See 1 John 3:14,

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.  
He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Note also what our Lord has to say in John 13:34, 35.

Are we following the Lord's example here?

III. HE IS AN EXAMPLE TO US IN THE REQUIREMENT FOR SUCH A MINISTRY.

For us, this is the hard part -- or at least harder than the rest.

Read vv. 4, 5.

To bring out the meaning of what the Lord did here, let me ask you to turn to 1 Pet. 5:5,

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.  
Yea, all of you be subject one to another,  
and be clothed with humility:  
for God resisteth the proud,  
and giveth grace to the humble.

". . . and be clothed with humility" -- which could also be rendered, and put on the apron of humility. Thayer tells

that the apron, or white scarf, "which was fastened to the girdle of the vest . . . distinguished slaves from freemen" (p. 166).

Thus, the Lord was taking the place of a bond-slave.

But the word which Peter uses for "humility" is also deserving of our attention because 1 Pet. 5:5 is undoubtedly linked with our text in John 13.

Basil, a Christian writer of very early times says that this is not only a Christian grace, i.e., given by God, but that it is the treasure chest out of which all other graces come!

Archbishop Trench tells us that

"no Greek writer employed it (i.e., the word for "humility" which Peter uses in 1 Pet. 5:5) before the Christian era, nor, apart from the influence of Christian writers, after" (p. 148).

Thus, it is a distinctly Christian word -- and it is very important that we understand its meaning.

"Humility" means that we lay aside the attitude or role which we have taken for ourselves, and assume a position which is more consistent with what we are -- which is the true one.

Thayer says that it is "a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness" (p. 614).

It is the recognition that in ourselves we are nothing -- that we are not only bondservants, but even unworthy to be that!

The root of this word is even used about our Lord by our Lord in Matt. 11:29 where He describes Himself as "lowly in heart."

Paul is an example in this. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:5, "For we preach not ourselves, but . . ."

It is probably at this point where there is the greatest loss of power and blessing among the Lord's people. We make too much of ourselves, and not enough of our Lord. We are unwilling to be what He became.

Cf. Phil. 2:5-8.

- IV. HE IS AN EXAMPLE TO US IN THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE HUMBLED HIMSELF. John tells us He "began to wash the disciples feet."

What a lot of rich symbolism there is here!

The need for the disciples was to have clean feet -- not to have another bath. And to do this the Lord used water.

The Lord is teaching here that, for "his own," they cannot be saved ("bathed") twice, but it is their walk that gets defiled! Thus, in our ministry toward each other, we need to take water (a picture of the Word -- see John 15:3 and Eph. 5:26) and wash each other's feet.

But how is this to be done? Are we to go around trying to set each other straight?

No! It seems to me to be significant that the Lord did not say anything. It was Who He was, and what He did, that are important.

Have you not known Christians who had a cleansing effect on your life even though they may not have said anything to you about your particular defilement. It is hard for you to be unholy in their presence because of the holiness of their lives? And humility was a great part of it -- and also the way in which they exalted the Lord and loved His Word?

This is what we need in our fellowship with each other -- in our ministry to each other -- not a planned, calculated work, but just the outworking of the Lord through our lives as He uses us to wash each others feet.

Illus.: I heard a man on the radio yesterday say that there can be too much Bible teaching -- that what we need is more fellowship. I know what he meant, but I would never want to have to explain that to the Lord. What do we do in our fellowship -- set aside the Word for fun and games?

How about your use of the Word for the sake of your brothers and sisters in Christ?

But now -- what will it mean to follow our Lord's example?

#### V. THE PROMISE.

See v. 17 -- "If ye know these things, happy are ye (the period does not come here) if ye do them."

The two crucial words here are:

- 1) "Know."
- 2) "Do" -- which means day after day, habitually.

Concl.: My years in the ministry have taught me that people can

come to church Sunday after Sunday, and listen to the messages without learning anything!

I have also learned from my own heart that I know a lot more than I do -- and I know that the same is true about a lot of you!

You cannot "do" with knowing, But you can "know" without doing. But it is also possible that you neither "know" nor "do."

Where are you this morning spiritually? Are you looking for blessing? Then here it is. And, oh, what a difference it will make in you to take this blessing to heart, and what great blessing would result for every child of God within the scope and influence of your life!

THE TEACHER AND HIS DISCIPLE

or

THE LORD AND HIS SERVANT

John 13:1-17

Intro: In vv. 13, 14 we see two titles that the disciples had used with the Lord, His approval of their use, and an indication of what is involved if this is really true.

The titles are "Master," meaning Teacher; "Lord," meaning Owner with sovereign rights over those He possesses.

In contrast with the first, Peter and the other Apostles were disciples, learners, pupils; in contrast with the second (as v. 16 indicates), they were bondservants.

Put the two together and we have the ideas present in v. 17:

- 1) Learning, under the instruction of the greatest Teacher Who ever lived.
- 2) Doing, or obedience to the one and only Lord of heaven and earth.

And they come in this order.

This was a time of learning. We are right at the beginning of it all in our text. The doing would come later.

What we are concerned about tonight is to see from these verses in John 13 what entered into their instruction, and then to see how the application can be made to the Lord's dealings with us.

First, it seems, that John asks us to take . . .

I. A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES (John 13:1-3).

These are truths about our Lord which give real meaning to that which the Lord did later to teach His disciples an important lesson.

John is emphasizing how important it is to know what we can know about the Lord.

Note the following:

- A. An emphasis on what the Lord knew. See not only vv. 1 and 3, but also v. 11.

In all of them John uses a verb "to describe our Lord's direct insight into divine things" (Thayer, p. 118). They basically mean that He did not learn them, but these are things which He has always known because they were a part of His eternal plan.

What did He know according to what John says here, and which would apply to these particular circumstances?

1. He knew that the time had come for His triumphant re-entry into heaven (v. 1).

This is important to understand in view of the fact that the Cross was between this particular time and that "hour" of which the Lord spoke.

2. He knew (v. 3) that He was not at the mercy of men, nor of circumstances because "the Father had given all things into his hands."

Thus we see that He was not just the Lord of the disciples, but He was also omnipotent!

The disciples needed to understand this.

3. He knew that His was a divine mission, and that it was destined to succeed (v. 3b) -- "that he was come from God, and went to God."
4. Finally, He knew all about His Enemy -- who he was going to use (Judas), and what he was going to do ("betray him").

This brings together vv. 2 and 11.

Thus, we can say:

- 1) That victory was certain.
- 2) That the Lord was in control.
- 3) That the Lord would ultimately overrule all of the work of the Enemy -- and his plan to use one of the Lord's own disciples.

These are truths which we need to know, and which cannot be separated from that which immediately follows.

But there is another thing about the Lord that John draws our attention to. There is . . .

- B. An emphasis on the love of the Lord.

Things were going to happen that would confuse and discourage the disciples. They would be guilty of unbelief. But v. 1 gives us the truth which we spent a considerable amount of time on this morning -- that nothing can ever happen that would interrupt or change in any way the love that the Lord has for "his own."

Thus, these truths about our Lord are to form the foundation



for our faith through all of the testings of life. Our Lord knows all about it. He is in absolute control. And His love always remains constant -- never growing less, never changing, never ceasing!

Take these truths to your own heart as you face your life tonight!

But let us look next at:

## II. THE ACTION OF THE LORD (John 13:4-11).

This is an illustration of how the ways of the Lord differ from our ways, and how meaningless they appear to be at times.

First we have:

- A. The Lord becoming a bondservant to His own disciples (vv. 4, 5).

Does this not seem to be unrelated to what what about to happen?

And does this not even seem to be in contradiction of the truth that we have seen in vv. 1-3?

How often the Lord appears to us in strange roles, less than He is, dealing with minor issues when major things are at stake! Is this not true.

And, for your encouragement, look at:

- B. Peter's reaction (vv. 6, 8a, 9).

It is just like we react, isn't it -- and in the stages that we are acquainted with?

1. First, amazement (v. 6). You have so many illustrations of this in Scripture -- Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, David, John the Baptist, and many more!

We expect one thing, and the Lord does something entirely different!

2. Second, rejection (v. 8a).

We speak when we ought to be quiet, and when we do we always say the wrong thing.

Have you said things to the Lord you would like to take back?

But there is another point:

3. Third, an extreme (v. 9).

We are either cold, or hot -- and often in our attempt to correct a mistake, we make another mistake.

Each time the Lord responded to Peter in a way to meet his need at that particular moment. Note His words in vv. 7, 8b, 10.

The Lord let Peter go through all of that as a part of a Master dealing with His disciple and of a Lord dealing with His servant. It would seem that we rarely, if ever, understand initially what the Lord is doing with us.

But this brings us to the last point:

### III. THE TEACHING OF THE LORD (John 13:12-17).

The fact that the Lord is concerned about our knowledge is brought out by vv. 7, 12.

He uses two words for "know" in v. 7 -- the first is the word that applies to His own kind of knowledge (that which is innate--(natural)), but also that which immediately discerns the reason for something. The second is that which is learned by experience -- and this second one is the word which the Lord uses again in v. 12.

How encouraging it ought to be to us to see that the Lord does eventually cause us to understand what He has done, and the truth that He wants us to know.

Three things can be said about what the Lord says:

- A. His ways with us always have to do, first of all, with our relationship to Him (vv. 13, 14).
- B. His ways with us always have to do, secondly, with the needs of our own heart -- in this case (and usually), for humility. Cf. vv. 14, 16.

The very fact that we do not understand should in itself be a humbling experience.

- C. His ways with us always have to do, in the third place, with our ministry (v. 15). And the chief part of our ministry is our obedience to the Lord in doing His will. "Ought" in v. 14 suggests a debt.

Concl: I conclude as I did this morning -- with a promise. To

"know" and to "do" always leads eventually to blessing. You cannot "do" before you "know," and so if the lesson is not complete, wait on the Lord. The time will come when He will say, "Know ye what I have done to you?"

What we need more than anything else is to trust completely in the Lord, to recognize His glorious attributes, and to do His will just because it is His will.

THE BETRAYAL -- A PAINFUL REVELATION  
John 13:18-30

Intro: This was a very, very difficult time for our Lord.  
John emphasizes how hard it was by the use of the word,  
"troubled." We have it in v. 21 -- "troubled in spirit."

It is a word which describes what was going on in our Lord's  
"spirit," i.e., inwardly. It indicates pain. The Greek word  
points to turmoil, like a storm, or when the parts of anything  
are all in motion in such a way that there is commotion. The  
first time we have the word in John's Gospel is in John 5:4  
where it is said that "an angel went down at a certain season  
into the pool, and troubled the water . . ." This helps us to  
understand what it means.

But the more important uses of the word are found in this Gospel  
in:

- 1) John 11:33 -- "When Jesus therefore saw her (Mary) weeping,  
and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned  
and the spirit, and was troubled."
- 2) John 12:27 -- in the record of the brief prayer uttered by  
our Lord -- "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?  
Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I  
unto this hour."

How amazing it is to contrast these verses which have to do with  
our Lord, with such verses as John 14:1, 27!

But this is the point: ~~THERE WERE~~ SOME THINGS WHICH WERE VERY  
HARD FOR OUR LORD -- ESPECIALLY THAT WHICH HAD TO DO WITH THE  
CROSS AND ALL OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED UP TO IT.

Gethsemane was certainly a part of this. See Luke 22:44,  
"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly:  
and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling  
down to the ground."

We detect how troubled our Lord was even on the Cross. Both  
Matthew (27:46) and Mark (15:34) record that He cried out in  
the words of David (Psa. 22:1),

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

But now let us look at our text. Notice first:

I. WHAT THE PAINFUL REVELATION WAS (John 13:21).

It was this: "One of you shall betray me."

Judas had been completely successful in covering up. None  
of the disciples was suspicious of him. In fact, each one  
(except for Judas) seems to have been concerned about him-

self. Matthew (26:22) tells us that after the Lord made this painful revelation, the disciples "were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?"

Matthew Henry mentions (V, 1099) that not even Judas gave himself away at this time. He wrote:

" . . . he that was false had his conscience so seared that he was not ashamed, neither could he blush, and so no discovery could be made in this way."

We can probably never in this life expect to have a full understanding of the question, Why did the Lord choose Judas as one of the twelve?, but we may have some suggestions to make from our text and from other Scriptures.

Let me give a few reasons:

- 1) It surely displays the wisdom of God, the power of God, the glory of God -- that our Lord should have such a one as Judas among His disciples, and yet for it, instead of hindering any of His eternal purposes, to fit right in with everything that the Lord came to do! Our Lord knew about Judas all along -- and yet He gave Judas power to heal, gave him authority to preach. It is even possible that some were even saved through the preaching of Judas!

But see John 6:70 after Peter's "Lord, to whom shall we go . . .":

"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

- 2) It is for our instruction.

Our Lord in v. 18 is quoting from Psa. 41:9, which David wrote, to show that this is a major tactic which Satan has employed from the very beginning -- TO RAISE UP OPPOSITION WITHIN ISRAEL, OR WITHIN THE CHURCH.

One writer has said:

" . . . it has usually happened in the Church in nearly every age that it has had no enemies more dangerous than its own household" (Calvin, Vol. 5, p. 63).

Is this not what Paul warned the Ephesian elders about? See Acts 20:30,

"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse thing, to draw away disciples after them."

- 3) It is a warning to the Church in every generation.

If Satan has done this in the past, he will do it again. And right now I am thinking of Judas himself. Here was a man who lived in the closest relationship with the Lord, and with His disciples, a man who knew the truth well enough to preach it (and who perhaps saw results), a man who performed miracles, a man who

ALSO THE REASON  
FOR THE WRITING  
OF JOHN!

was completely above suspicion among his colleagues,  
AND YET HE WAS NOT SAVED, AND WOULD NEVER BE SAVED!

Is the Lord not warning us that this is not only a possibility, but an actuality in every work which He has established?

Should you and I not ask the question, "Lord, is it I?, if Peter asked it, and if John asked it (and so on)?

Did Peter have this in mind when his brethren to make their calling and election sure? Cf. 2 Pet. 1:10.

And what about Paul's exhortation in 2 Cor. 13:5a:

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. . ."

Will you take this as a personal warning, because Central Bible Church is not immune to such a problem?

- 4) It is to encourage our patience. Judas as the time came when the Lord exposed Judas, so we can be sure that He is caring for His Church and that He will purge out that which does not belong.

There are times when the Church is to take action; there are other times when it is the will of God for His people to wait so that He can work -- as He did with Judas!

## II. NOTICE: THE ONE TO WHOM THE REVELATION CONCERNING JUDAS WAS MADE (John 13:22-30).

The passage clearly indicates that the 10 did not know why Judas went out -- but John knew because the Lord had made it known privately to him.

John calls himself here, "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved."

Why? Was it because He actually loved John more than any of the others?

I do not think that that is the point.

The point is connected with what the Lord was about to say in John 14:21, 23 -- and it possibly accounts for the strong emphasis which John has in his writings on OBEDIENCE. It is obedience which God rewards with a deeper insight into His will, His ways, His Word -- and which opens the way for a greater manifestation of His love than most of the people of God ever experience!

If you are having trouble enjoying and understanding your Bible, perhaps it is the Lord's way of telling you that He is grieved by your disobedience to His Word!

Finally -- I want you to see:

## III. THE LORD'S REMARKS WHICH LED UP TO THIS PAINFUL REVELATION (John 13:18-20). Or, in other words, what did the Lord want His disciples to understand from the fact that this

revelation was made about Judas? Or, to state it even another way, how can this help us in our own lives as well as in the work of the Lord today?

Let me point out four things:

- A. The Lord knows all about everything that is going on.

Note: "I speak not of you all (i.e., the things He had just said): I know whom I have chosen."

I do not believe that the Lord is talking about the elect in this passage, but about His choice of the 12. He knew what was going on -- everything that was going on. He knew what Judas was going to do. He knew Satan's designs. Judas might try to hide it, but that was impossible to hide from the Lord.

Cf. Heb. 4:13,

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Jeremiah prayed in Jer. 32:18b, 19,

" . . . the Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts, is his name, Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

Do any of us think that we are hiding anything from the Lord? If so, we are only kidding ourselves.

The story of Judas should teach us that if we persist in doing that which displeases God, Satan will not only put greater evil in our hearts (John 13:2), but he will so completely overpower us that we will find ourselves guilty of sins we never thought that we would ever commit!

Will you take the warning from the omniscience of God? Man's disobedience always reveals a great deficiency in his knowledge of God.

- B. Our Lord would teach us the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible (John 13:18b).

David's words were not only a record of his own experience, but they were prophetic of Christ! To eat bread indicates a very intimate relationship; to lift up the heel means a sudden attack of treachery when

outward circumstances seemed to indicate the closest of friendships.

Remember that the Word teaches that the only One Who will never disappoint you, the only One you can trust implicitly, is the Lord. The Word stands, and it is always true. Your greatest problems may come from those who have been the closest to you.

- C. Such a revelation was to be added confirmation to the disciples that He was really the Lord,  
that He was the Christ -- the Son of God.  
Cf. John 13:19.

Make sure that God has a purpose even for the greatest of our trials -- and that purpose is to make Himself known to us in a greater way -- that we should know Him and love Him and trust Him MORE!

- D. He wants us to know that He stands behind and confirms the ministry to every person who trusts Him for salvation (John 13:20).

This is a very wonderful word from our Lord. What is He teaching?

Let me state it this way: Have you ever known some person you thought was a servant of the Lord, possibly the person who led you to Christ -- and then suddenly things went sour in his life --

perhaps he became guilty of immorality, and his home was broken up;

this may have led to other sins -- drinking, dishonesty in business, etc.;

and that person who may be your father or mother, your Sunday School teacher, or even your Pastor, eventually ridicules the Lord and everything that he once supposedly believed and taught;

WHAT DOES THIS DO TO ALL OF THE PEOPLE HE (or SHE) MAY HAVE LED TO THE LORD, AND ALL OF THE GOODS SUCH A PERSON MAY HAVE DONE?

The Lord has the answer.

He does not say that every person He sends will be saved. He may choose to use someone who falsely professes to be a Christian, but the important thing for us to realize is that our eyes should be on the Lord and on the Father -- not on the instrument that He may be pleased to use. Therefore, the worker may go bad, BUT, IF THE WORK HAS BEEN DONE BY GOD, THAT SHALL STAND!

(Over)



WHEN JUDAS WAS GONE  
John 13:31-38

Intro: A real turning point in our Lord's ministry to His disciples is marked by John's expression in v. 31, "Therefore, when he (Judas) was gone out."

The Upper Room Discourse really begins here -- and we find the Lord speaking to His disciples as He had not spoken to them before.

We actually have three divine revelations in our text -- but revelations which Judas was not to hear. There are things that just cannot be talked about when people like Judas are present. And so our Lord waited until Judas was gone!

In looking at these three revelations, you will note that:

- 1) The first one has to do with the Lord Jesus Himself, and with the Father -- vv. 31, 32.
- 2) The second has to do with all of the Apostles -- and with all of us, too -- vv. 33-35.
- 3) The last is just for Peter -- vv. 36-38. But what a warning there is for each of us, too, in what the Lord said to Peter.

In fact, all three of these sections have some very practical lessons for every child of God even though they were originally given to only the 11.

Let us look at them in order. First . . .

I. A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND VICTORY (John 13:31, 32).

Most of the disciples were apparently unaware of what was taking place. The Lord had spoken to them several times about His approaching death, but they did not really pay attention to what He was saying. Peter had even rebuked the Lord for expressing such a thing.

How would you have felt if you knew that Judas had gone out to arrange for your betrayal -- and that he would be successful? Or, how would you have felt if you had been John and had known why Judas had gone?

It could easily have been a time of panic, a time of anxiety, of fear, of utter discouragement.

But instead, with the Lord, it was a time to state again, in more wonderful terms than He had used previously, what the ultimate outcome would be!

(Read the verses again.)

How different this is from the way men would look at such an event as crucifixion! The disciples would have been inclined to feel, as Bishop Ryle says, "shame, disappointment, and dismay" (II, 267).

But the Lord was right. It was at the Cross, more than any other place, that the Lord Jesus was glorified, and that the Father was glorified.

What does GLORIFICATION mean?

It is certainly one of the most important terms in the Bible for God, for the Lord Jesus, and even for us as believers!

It means:

- 1) To be exalted, and so
  - 2) To be honored.
- But especially
- 3) To be seen as one really is.

It means that at the Cross, and through the Cross, and by the results of the Cross, believers would have more of an opportunity to see the Lord Jesus,  
to see the Father,  
and to know them as they are -- than in anything else that they had ever done! More so than in creation -- even though creation declares the glory of God. More so than in any of the works which the Lord Jesus had performed -- although we see Him in His works. **BUT IT IS IN THE CROSS AND THROUGH THE CROSS THAT HIS GREATEST GLORY IS MANIFESTED!**

It is there we see the love of God,  
the righteousness of God,  
the faithfulness of God.

It is there that we see the love of Christ,  
the humiliation of Christ,  
the obedience of Christ,  
the power of Christ -- and of God!

Who could ever exhaust what it is possible to learn about God and about Christ through the Cross.

When you begin to understand this, you begin to understand Paul's words in such passages as 1 Cor. 2:2 and Gal. 6:14.

**BUT THE POINT THAT OUR LORD IS MAKING IS THAT THIS WAS HIS GREATEST HOUR OF VICTORY, OF TRIUMPH -- NOT A TIME OF DEFEAT AND DISGRACE!**

Do you see the lesson for us in this?

Note the words of Peter (of all people) in 1 Pet. 4:12, 13. We are to take comfort in our trials by looking at the out-

come, at the purpose -- AT THE GLORY!

See also 1 Pet. 1:6-9.

Thus, our Lord's victory is to be a comfort for us in our sufferings -- because through them He is making Himself known, and through them He is bringing us toward our own glorification.

But let us look at the second point.

## II. A NEW COMMANDMENT (John 13:33-35).

The Lord had just spoken of the manifestation of Himself (which is always the most important object in what He does); NOW HE SPEAKS ABOUT THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS PEOPLE -- OF HIS DISCIPLES!

This is the only place where it is recorded that the Lord called His disciples, "Little children" -- a term of endearment, showing His loving concern for them at this time.

The disciples had been known as His disciples because of their association with the Lord -- as the trial shows, and even as the temptation of Peter shows.

But now the Lord was going away. How were they to be known from this point on as His disciples?

Note: These verses also have to do with a manifestation -- the manifestation of the Lord's people.

Such a manifestation was NOT:

- 1) Through their works, their miracles.
- 2) Primarily through their preaching and teaching.
- 3) By means of their personal gifts of ministry.

BUT BY THEIR LOVE!

But, in order to see the full import of this, we need to ask: In what sense was this "a new commandment"?

The answer seems to be twofold:

- 1) The Law had stressed loving one's neighbor -- which would not set any qualification for the spiritual condition of the one toward whom we are showing love (i.e., believer, or unbeliever). NOW THE LORD STRESSES THEIR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER. See it three times in vv. 34, 35.
- 2) The Law had said, ". . . thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself . . ." (Lev. 19:18). Now the Lord says something "new" -- "as I have loved you." Thus, His

love for us is the pattern of our love for each other.

AND IT IS PRIMARILY THROUGH THIS THAT THE WORLD WILL BE FORCED TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST.

This is Paul's word also to husbands in Eph. 5:25!

No believer can actually ever attain to this, but the basic ingredients can be there, and we must be striving all the time, by His grace, to love each other more and more.

Remember that this is not the world's idea of love, but the manifestation of God's love which we see all through the Word of God -- and especially in Christ!

How different would be our fellowship, and how different would be our witness to the world, IF WE WERE OBEYING THIS "NEW COMMANDMENT" OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

So far we have had two revelations -- now we come to a third. And it is given as . . .

### III. A PREDICTION OF FAILURE (John 13:36-38).

It is almost as though Peter had not heard vv. 34, 35.

Peter seems originally to have been more interested in the things that the Lord did not reveal than in the things that He did reveal. And how disturbing his questions could be -- how irritating it could be! There was a self-assertiveness that was to be a problem to him. He obviously is very self-confident, self-assured. Why can't I go where you are? I will go even though it means death for me!

There is little doubt but that Peter's words were prompted by his deep love for the Lord Jesus, but he had not learned as yet what he was going to learn about the utter frailty and undependability of the flesh!

From this chapter and what it has to say about our Lord's words to Judas as well as His words to Peter, Matthew Henry says,

The Lord "knows not only the wickedness of sinners, but the weakness of saints" (V, 1106).

How much attention do we pay to what the Lord is saying to us? Are we more interested in what is not revealed than in what is revealed?

Another writer has expressed the meaning of this passage as

PETER in  
1 Pet. 1:22

it applies to us in these words:

"Let it be a settled principle in our religion, that there is an amount of weakness in all our hearts, of which we have no adequate conception, and that we never know how far we might fall if we were tempted. We fancy sometimes, like Peter, that there are some things we could not possibly do. We look pitifully upon others who fall into certain sins, and please ourselves in the thought that at any rate we should not have done so! We know nothing at all. The seeds of every sin are latent in our hearts, even when renewed, and they only need occasion, or carelessness, or the withdrawal of God's grace for a season, to put forth an abundant crop. Like Peter, we may think we can do wonders for Christ, and, like Peter, we may learn by bitter experience that we have no power and might at all" (Ryle, II, pp. 269, 270).

We are the strongest when we are most conscious of our own weakness, and when we realize that all of our strength is in Christ!

Are you learning this -- as our Lord will say in John 15, "without me ye can do nothing"? See v. 5b.

Concl: What a difference it would make in our lives if we were learning these three revelations that the Lord gives us in these 8 verses!

And remember that the proof that we are learning is to be seen in the practical effect that the truth has upon our hearts and in our daily lives. Pray for understanding. Pray for the faith and strength to trust the Lord. Pray that your heart will be set upon His glory.

Here is that divine prescription for JOY which others have seen:

- 1) JESUS first (vv. 31, 32).
- 2) OTHERS (especially our fellow-believers) second (vv. 33-35).
- 3) YOURSELF last -- seeing greater needs in your own heart than you are inclined to see any place else.

We can see that the Lord is here laying the foundation for what He is going to say later in this message about His peace and His joy -- and how they can have it in their own lives.

AN UNTRoubLED HEART  
John 14:1-14

Intro: If you will read, and re-read, John 13, 14, 15, 16 -- and even 17, you will see that probably the main reason for this message is to keep the disciples from having troubled hearts.

See John 14:1a, 27b; 16:6, 22.

Add to this the very obvious way in which they were troubled in chapter 13.

It might help us if there were no chapter divisions at all from chapter 13 through chapter 16.

But let us begin this morning by noticing . . .

- I. THE COMMAND OF OUR LORD -- which we might also call an exhortation, or a prohibition: "Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1a).

It is perhaps best to leave it as a command. We need to get the full force of it for our own lives.

A look at the word "troubled" itself and all of the verses cited above would lead us to see what it means to be troubled and some of the causes.

We had this very same word back in John 12:27.

The main reason that they were inclined to be troubled was that the Lord had told them that He was going away, and that they could not come with Him right then!

Thus, separation from our loved ones here on earth, especially from people we are dependent upon (like children who are separated from their parents -- even a little child who is lost in a super market), causes us to be troubled. If this separation is death, the trouble is all the greater.

So to be troubled means:

- 1) To be filled with sorrow.
- 2) To be fearful.
- 3) To have no peace, to lose one's calmness of mind.
- 4) To be without joy.
- 5) To be filled with inward commotion. Note: It is the "heart" that is not to be "troubled."
- 6) To be distressed, disturbed, restless.

We all have experienced this spiritual heart trouble, but these other verses and a understanding of the word "troubled" itself will help us to identify the problem.

Undoubtedly many of us here are bothered by being "troubled" this morning!

But let the full force of what the Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples hit you. This is strictly forbidden. To have a troubled heart is displeasing to the Lord, and dishonoring to Him. To remain in this condition is to be guilty of disobedience, and disobedience is SIN!

We can excuse it by saying that this is the way most people live, even the way many believers live, BUT LET US START BY ALLOWING THE FULL IMPACT OF THE WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS TO BE IMPRESSED UPON OUR HEARTS, OUR TROUBLED HEARTS -- "Let not your heart be troubled."

Say it over and over again until it gets to you!

BUT -- it is one thing to tell us NOT to let our hearts "be troubled," and it is another thing to tell us HOW to keep from it -- especially when it seems to be such a natural tendency of every human heart!

How do we keep from it?

There is one answer:

## II. THE SAFEGUARD AGAINST A TROUBLED HEART (John 14:1b).

Do you see what it is?

It is faith -- faith in God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ -- not in One or the Other, but in Both -- because true faith has to be in both.

However, sometimes, because of the stage of spiritual growth we are in, the emphasis in our faith may tend to be in One Member of the Godhead rather than in All of Them!

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

So -- when we are "troubled," there is something wrong with our faith. We are not trusting God and His Son the way we should be. Our confidence may be in other people, or in ourselves, or even in circumstances (which can so easily change), but it is not in God, it is not in Christ.

Remember the good word in Heb. 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him (God), for . . ."

Let me ask you this morning, "How is your faith? In connection with the problems you have, are you trusting the Lord -- really trusting Him, resting in Him?"

Let me digress from this passage for just a moment to remind you what faith is.

Faith does not originate with us. It is exercised by us, but it does not originate with us. I am not talking about the way we trust each other, or things (such as sitting down in a chair), but I am talking about faith in God and faith in Christ. Such faith does not come from us. It can only come from God. That is the only place you can get it -- even saving faith!

Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Heb. 12:2; Rom. 10:17.

This last verse leads me to our next point -- "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

This lead us to ask the question, What did the Lord Jesus Christ give them in this passage to strengthen their faith so that their hearts would not be troubled?"

Would He tell them "not" to let their hearts "be troubled," and then indicate that this was only possible through faith, without telling them things to strengthen their faith?

The full answer to this question is found in John 14-17, but let us just begin this morning by confining ourselves to our text: vv. 2-14.

Here we have . . .

### III. FIVE PREVENTIVES (or CURES, if that is what you need) TO KEEP YOU FROM A TROUBLED HEART (John 14:2-14).

Some of these may surprise you, but remember that these are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ which produce faith, and that they cannot be wrong!

- A. Their faith was to be strengthened by what the Lord Jesus said about heaven (John 14:2, 3).

In other words, He directs their thoughts to the ultimate outcome of all that He was doing. His death was not the end. The separation would not be permanent. Ultimately all of His own would be with Him.

Note:

- 1) What He calls heaven -- "my Father's house."
- 2) What is there -- "mansions," or better, permanent dwelling places. We won't be moving around in heaven.
- 3) What He is doing -- "I go to prepare a place for you."
- 4) What He will do then -- "I will come again."



5) And then what? He said, "I will . . . receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Do you believe that? Are you trusting in that hope? Then that is going to keep you from having a troubled heart.

But let us look at the second thing the Lord says:

B. Their faith was to be strengthened by what He said about the Gospel and about salvation (John 14:4-6).

How well do you know the Gospel? How familiar are you with the great truths that make up the Gospel? Do you know what they are?

The tragedy with so many of the Lord's people is that they have never moved beyond what they knew when they first came to the knowledge of Christ as Saviour.

Look, even, at what Thomas says. You would wonder if he was even saved.

How does the Lord define salvation here? It is coming eventually to the Father.

How do you get there?

There is only one way, and there has never been but just one way -- THROUGH CHRIST!

It makes little difference what happens in this life if you are trusting in Christ as your Saviour, and you are guaranteed that He has prepared you for the Father's presence.

But there is a third truth -- and you probably will be surprised to find it here. It is this:

C. Their faith was to be strengthened by knowing that the Lord Jesus Christ was the full and complete revelation of God, the Father (John 14:7-11).

Peace comes by having our minds "stayed" on God. Cf. Isa. 26:3, 4. Thus, it is the knowledge of God which brings us peace -- the knowledge of His character, His attributes.

And we have more of that since the Lord Jesus Christ came than the people of God ever had prior to His first advent.

The pathetic thing about Philip is that, while he had

from the very beginning understood that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah, he had apparently never seen the Lord Jesus as the final and complete revelation of God, the Father. See John 1:45 and compare it with John 14:8.

How many of us are like Philip -- we have never profited from the Lord in this way?

The Lord indicates that we have to ways in which we can come to this understanding about our Lord:

- 1) By His words -- v. 10.
- 2) By His works -- vv. 10, 11.

Now notice the fourth point:

- D. Their faith was to be strengthened by what the Lord had to say about their works (John 14:12).

What would you think -- that it would be better to work along with the Lord on earth, or for you to work alone, with the Lord in heaven?

Most of us would feel that the first would be better. The Lord said that the last was better.

The reason: "And greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

Just think about what has been accomplished by the Lord's people on earth since He went back to the Father -- from Pentecost to the present time!

We will have more about this in chapters 15, 16:-- but just get the fact, the promise, in your heart for now so that your faith can be strengthened.

Finally . . .

- E. Their faith was to be strengthened by what the Lord had to say about prayer (John 14:13, 14).

Notice the emphasis in both verses is that HE WILL ACT in answer to the prayers of His people.

See Phil. 4:6, 7 in this light.

This is the place where most Christians are the weakest. It seems that we do everything else before we pray. Are you hoping for an untroubled heart without prayer? Such a thing is not possible!

Concl: One of the miracles which illustrates the truth of our passage this morning is found in Matt. 8:23-27.

The disciples got into a ship with the Lord, only to be caught in a storm. They were terrified, and their hearts were troubled even more because the Lord was asleep -- and he continued to sleep right through the storm.

Eventually they cried out for the Lord to save them because they thought that they would all be destroyed in the storm. The Lord awoke, calmed the storm -- but before He did that He said in the midst of the storm,

"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"

Could the Lord have died in the storm? Could they -- in view of all that He had been teaching them about their future ministries?

Often we react to problems like this means that it is all over! What is the problem? It is with our faith. Oh, how much there is that we need to learn -- and then to remember. And how important it is that we learn more and more of the Lord, and that we look to Him for our faith. Then, through the faith which He gives through His Word, we can have untroubled hearts whatever the storm may be.

WHO LOVES THE LORD?

John 14:15-25

Intro: Although we cannot take the whole Upper Room Discourse at once, yet we must forget that it is one message! There is a unity about John 13-16 in particular that we will miss if we are not reading through all of these chapters repeatedly.

This is why it is so important for us always to note the context when dealing with any passage of Scripture. It is the case in teaching the passage that we have before us this morning.

This passage is not something different from what we had last week. It is a part of it. And it is a part of what we will have, the Lord willing, next week.

So -- what was the Lord talking about in the first 14 verses of John 14?

He was speaking of an untroubled heart -- that we must not let our hearts be troubled.

He clearly indicated that the way to prevent, or to cure, a troubled heart, was by faith in God and faith in Him (the Lord Jesus Christ).

More than that -- in verses 2-14 we have the ways in which the Lord sought to strengthen their faith.

That same emphasis continues in our text this morning -- that which will keep us from having a troubled heart -- or, to apply it to the disciples -- that which would give them peace concerning the Lord's announcement that He was going away, and that they could not come with Him.

See John 13:33; 36; 37; 14:2b.

THEY WERE OBVIOUSLY TROUBLED BECAUSE THEY LOVED HIM, AND BECAUSE THEY LOVED HIM, THEY WANTED TO BE WHEREVER HE WAS.

But the question is this: IS THIS (above) THE GREATEST EVIDENCE OF OUR LOVE FOR THE LORD? HOW CAN WE TELL THAT WE REALLY DO LOVE HIM?

The Lord gives the answer to this four times in our text --  
-- three stated positively;  
-- one stated negatively.

See vv. 15, 21, 23, 24.

I. THE TRUE EVIDENCE THAT WE LOVE THE LORD (John 14:15).

It is not that we miss Him because He is not here on earth, nor is it just that we want to be where He is (there can be other reasons for that),  
BUT IT IS THAT THE MAIN CONCERN IN ALL THAT WE DO IS THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS -- THAT WE DO HIS WILL AT ALL TIMES AND UNDER EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE, HIS WILL WHICH IS EXPRESSED IN HIS WORD!

And we do it, remember, because we want to please Him, because we love Him.

This, in turn, brings His blessing in more ways that we can possibly know, but the blessings must not be our main motive. Our main motive is to demonstrate our love for Him -- in every area of our lives, in all that we do!

Now the big question is this: IS THIS THE WAY WE LIVE? DO WE EVEN KNOW THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD, FOUND THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPTURES, SO THAT WE WILL KNOW WHAT HE HAS COMMANDED US TO DO?

Let me be a little more specific:

- Do you please the Lord by the way you treat His people? (This is the main point here; see John 13: 34, 35.)
- Is the Lord pleased with the way you treat His Word? Are you reading it faithfully?
- What about the other things you read?
- What do you watch on television? Is the Lord pleased with that? Do you parents watch things that you would not want your children to watch? If your children should not see it, should you? Are you pleasing the Lord here?
- What about your praying? Do you pray at all? Are your prayers such a minor part of your life that they could be expressed in just a few minutes out of your entire day?
- What habits do you have that you know are not pleasing to the Lord? Do you have a guilty conscience about them, and expect to quit them some day, but up to now you have done nothing about them?
- Do you ever take the Lord's Name in vain?
- What about church -- and what about serving the Lord?
- What are you doing to see that the Gospel gets to every creature -- to your family and neighbors, as well as to people in other countries?
- Fathers, are you pleasing the Lord by the way you treat your wives and your families? Are you praying for them, and teaching them, and loving them?
- Mothers, wives, is the Lord pleased with your attitude toward your husbands?

-- Children, young people, does your attitude and relationship with your parents please the Lord?

I could ask many, many more questions. But I want you to see that this touches all areas of our lives, all that we are, all that we think, all that we do -- our relationship to each other as well as to Lord.

If you look at these things in your lives, can it really be said that you love the Lord?

Let me ask you an even more penetrating question: When you look at these things, can you see that you really know the Lord? The Lord gave this to His disciples just after Judas had gone out. Nothing is more heart-searching than this!

But, you say, I have tried many times to please the Lord, but I am always failing.

We all know what this is -- and this leads us to the next point that the Lord makes, a point which at first might seem unrelated to what He has just said. But it bears the closest and most important relationship!

## II. THE ONE WHO HELPS US, WHO ENABLES US, TO SHOW OUR LOVE FOR THE LORD: THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 14:16-20).

Note the Lord's words in verses 16, 17 -- concentrating on the words, "another Comforter."

A "Comforter" is a helper, one who is literally called to our side to help us.

By the words, "another Comforter," we can see:

- 1) That the Lord Jesus is a Comforter.
- 2) That the Holy Spirit is also a Comforter.
- 3) That the Holy Spirit is not the Lord Jesus.
- 4) That the Holy Spirit is just like the Lord Jesus as to His nature -- since "another" means another of the same kind.

This "Comforter" is coming to stay. He is not just going to be "with" them, but "in" them.

He is called "the Spirit of truth" because His main concern is for the Word of God. He will teach us. He will keep reminding us of it. And He is "in" us to enable us to live according to the Word.

Consequently the Lord has not left us like orphans in the world. To do so would mean to leave us at the mercy of our circumstances, at the mercy of the world -- its people,

its god, its ways, utterly unable to help ourselves.

The Lord has made a far greater provision for us than most of us realize against the flesh, the world, and the Devil. And that provision is in the Holy Spirit who is our "Comforter" at all times, with each of us as though He had nothing else to do!

How much has this truth meant in your life? How great is your dependence upon the Holy Spirit? If it had been possible for you to obey the Lord, to love the Lord, in your own strength, such a "Comforter" would never have been given to you and to me.

This is a provision that the world does not have, and the world knows nothing about it!

But there is more here.

### III. THE AMAZING BLESSINGS WHICH COME TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD WHO LIVE IN OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD (John 14:21-25).

What does it mean to have the Lord's commands, and to keep them?

These expressions mean:

- 1) That they are in our possession.
- 2) That we know what they are.
- 3) That we believe they express without any question God's will for us.
- 4) That we obey them.
- 5) That we stand guard over them.

God has given them to us by divine revelation. We search the Scriptures to find out what they are. Our heart is drawn by the Lord to them, and we know that they are for us. The Holy Spirit enables us to obey them. And then we set ourselves to preserve them in our generation as that which is the expression of God's will for all of His people.

This is what it means.

But what are the blessings? Specifically, there are four. But what they actually mean is that instead of being deprived of the Lord Jesus, THE LIFE OF OBEDIENCE BRINGS US INTO A FELLOWSHIP, INTO A RELATIONSHIP, WITH ALL THREE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE WHILE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WAS HERE ON EARTH! Note what they are:

- A. Special manifestations of the love of the Father (vv. 21, 23).

His love precedes ours, but it also follows ours.

We cannot tell from this passage what these evidences of our Father's love will be, but one of them certainly is an untroubled heart!

B. Special manifestations of the love of Christ (v. 21).

Again -- we cannot say what these will be, but it obviously includes that which the disciples were fearful of losing: the very presence of the Lord Himself.

C. A greater knowledge of Christ Himself -- "and will manifest myself unto him" (v. 21b).

Think how much there was about the Lord which the Apostles did not understand -- the marvelous truths which the child of God discovers as he gets into the books of the NT.

D. The permanent indwelling of the Father and the Son -- in addition to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit -- "and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (v. 23b).

Could you have anticipated anything like this?

Link this with Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in Eph. 3:16 -- the Spirit,  
17-19a -- Christ,  
19b -- God.

And it is no wonder that Paul follows this with the words we find in Eph. 3:20, 21.

"Our abode" is the same word in the Greek translated "mansions" in John 14:2. It means a permanent dwelling place.

Concl: Let me ask you -- IS THIS DESCRIPTIVE OF YOUR LIFE?  
OF MINE?

If it is not, do you see where the trouble is? It is traceable to one fact: That we do not love the Lord as we should. And our lack of love for Him is very obvious by our failure to be obedient to our Lord's commandments.

We cannot do it by ourselves. It is only possible through the Holy Spirit -- Who leads us into such a relationship with Himself, and with the Father, and with the Lord Jesus, which we would never have dreamed possible -- and which the Apostles never knew while the Lord was visibly present on the earth.

May the Spirit of God lead us into such a life as this!



WORDS OF PEACE AND FAITH

John 14:26-31

Intro: The unique thing about John 14 (or one unique thing) is that God is referred to as the Father more in this chapter than in any other chapter of the Bible! It is used over 20 times.

But it is always "my Father," or simply "the Father" -- not at all in this chapter, your Father. "Your Father" comes later in John 20:17. It receives strong emphasis in the Epistles. But here we see our Lord in this relationship with God, and this characteristic emphasized with reference to God Himself!

I am not going to comment on it any more than just to mention it, but I do want you to recognize this fact that makes John 14 unique among all of the chapters of the Bible.

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The subject which I have given to this passage is WORDS OF PEACE AND FAITH.

- 1) The emphasis on PEACE is in v. 27.
- 2) The emphasis on FAITH is in v. 29.

The first of these ties in with John 14:1 -- and so it really includes the whole chapter. But in v. 27 the Lord adds the words, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," and then concludes after, "Let not your heart be troubled," with, "neither let it be afraid."

"Peace," as we all know, was the Jewish greeting -- and it still is! It was meant to include every good thing -- especially health and prosperity.

But the Lord says, as He uses this word, that His peace is given to His disciples BUT He adds the words, "not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

So,

- 1) As their heritage ("Peace I leave with you"), and
  - 2) As a gift to be treasured ("my peace I give unto you),
- He wants them to know that this is not the kind of peace that the world is talking about, nor is it given "as" the world wishes peace.

Our Lord's peace is not a peace which is dependent upon things or circumstances, but is a peace of heart which is independent of these things. It is not given in small quantities, but in abundance. And it is not given for just a time, or under certain conditions, but it is an abiding peace -- under all conditions, and even stretching into eternity itself!

Meditate much on this -- and pray continually for it, and for others who belong to the Lord to know it, too. It is not an accident that Paul begins his Epistles usually with, "Grace to you, and peace . . ."

But now let us look at FAITH -- in v. 29.

John 13:19 is very similar. The Lord's words produce faith.

Speaking of the relationship between the Word and faith, William Romaine, who lived 200 years ago, once wrote:

"Indeed, if He (the Lord) had spoken nothing, there could have been no faith: for His word comes first -- it is spoken -- it is heard -- and then faith comes by hearing. Look well then to His word!" (The Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith, pp. 288, 289).

So we are led to this conclusion: The Lord has not only promised us peace and faith, but He has provided means by which that peace and faith can be ours -- and that means is His Word, the great truths of Scripture and the promises which are usually given in connection with the commands He has given us to obey.

As far as our text is concerned this morning, WHAT ARE THE TRUTHS WHICH THE LORD MENTIONS HERE AS THE TRUTHS WHICH WILL BRING US PEACE AND FAITH -- and which will see that they are maintained in our hearts?

You may be in for a surprise IF you are looking for PEACE and FAITH as the world thinks about them.

There are five major truths here -- and when I say, "major," I really mean, MAJOR!

I. TRUTH #1 -- THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 14:26).

The fact of the Spirit's coming had been mentioned in vv. 16, 17; NOW the first reason for His coming to us is given -- that we might know the words of the Lord Jesus, and that we might remember them.

The Word cannot be known in any other way!

This would include not only what the Lord said while He was here on earth, but what He said before He came, and what He made known by the Spirit after He went back to the Father. In other words -- all of Scripture!

If you need peace, and if you need faith (and we all do), then go to the Word, and depend upon the Holy Spirit to teach you.

But, now let us ask, When I come to the Word and depend upon the Holy Spirit, what does He teach me:

- 1) To give me peace, and
- 2) To give me faith?

Look at the text:

II. TRUTH #2 -- THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST (John 14:28a).

Are you experiencing the peace and the faith that this great doctrine of Scripture brings to our hearts?

This is what we had in John 14:1-3.

Cf. 1 Thess. 4:18 -- at the conclusion of that great passage on the return of the Lord.

See also 1 Cor. 15:58.

Do you wonder about the direction that world events are taking? Are you worried about it? (I did not say concerned, but "worried"; we need to be concerned.)

Listen: Every day brings us closer to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ will return. We are closer to that time this morning than any generation has ever been!

Do we, then, just give up, and quit?

Not if you know the Word. This is the reason for us to work harder and to be more holy than we ever have before!

What peace and what faith are to be found in this great truth!

III. TRUTH #3 -- THE PRESENT MINISTRY OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN (John 14:28b).

See also John 16:10.

A lot is involved here, but let me mention two things in particular:

- 1) What it means that He is there.
- 2) What He is doing there.

With regard to the first -- it means that His work on earth, on the cross, has been finished, and accepted by the Father. Cf. Rom. 5:1.

With regard to the second -- cf. Heb. 7:25; 4:14-16. And then add to these, our own privilege in prayer as is taught by the Apostle Paul in Phil. 4:6, 7, noting what it says about "the peace of God."

Is this where you are looking to find your peace and your faith, or are you earth-bound, just dwelling on the surface of the truth of the Word of God?

But let us go on to . . .

IV. TRUTH #4 -- THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST (John 14:30).

What do the words at the end of this verse mean if they do not mean that with all of the probing and tempting that the Devil did with our Lord, he found no weakness,  
no defect,  
no sin in our Lord.

He found not only that He "did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22a), but that He could not sin -- that such a thing was utterly impossible.

So again -- let me use this to point to two other related truths:

- 1) Our absolute, eternal security in our salvation.
- 2) The peace and faith we can have in the Lord's dealings with us -- for He will never sin against us; He is incapable of making any mistakes!

We have one more.

V. TRUTH #5 -- A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CROSS (John 14:31).

In v. 30 the Lord did not say that Judas was coming, or that the Jews were coming, or that the Romans were coming -- BUT THAT "THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD COMETH" -- thus putting the blame where it belonged!

However, you might get the idea if you do not understand v. 31 that our Lord was a helpless victim, was trapped by His enemies (the Devil, demons, and men), and so was unable to escape!

But that is not the case! They were not in charge; HE WAS! He gave Himself into their hands because He came primarily to express His love for His Father by laying down His life to do the Father's will!

But what is the point in this truth which contributes to our peace and to our faith?

It is this revelation of the power of Christ -- His absolute sovereignty in the face of the worst possible conditions -- "the prince of this world cometh"!

What does it mean to us? It means that nothing can arise in

our lives, however Satan may oppose us, but that the Lord is in complete control, working all things out in accordance with Eph. 1:11 and Rom. 8:28. Cf. Rom. 8:38, 39.

Concl: If your peace and your faith are dependent upon material possessions, or peaceful conditions in the world, or favorable personal circumstances, you are in serious trouble.

But if your peace and faith are founded upon the Lord, upon His Word and His works, upon His promises, His glory, His sinlessness and wisdom and power, then your peace will carry you through any trial, and your faith will stand whatever may come, because they rest upon your great Saviour -- not upon you, or things, or conditions, or other people.

Back in 1779 John Newton wrote the words to this hymn -- words with which I would like to close my message this morning:

"Though troubles assail us, and dangers affright,  
Though friends should all fail us, and foes all unite,  
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide,  
The promise assures us, 'The Lord will provide.'

"The birds without garner or storehouse, are fed;  
From them let us learn to trust God for our bread:  
His saints what is fitting shall ne'er be denied  
So long as 'tis written, 'The Lord will provide.'

"When Satan assails us to stop up our path,  
And courage all fails us, we triumph by faith.  
He cannot ~~take~~ from us, though oft he has tried,  
This heart-cheering promise, 'The Lord will provide.'

"No strength of our own, and no goodness we claim;  
Yet, since we have known of the Saviour's great Name,  
In this our strong tower for safety we hide:  
The Lord is our power, 'The Lord will provide.'"

Let us not be distressed by the Iranians,  
by our economy,  
by any of the uncertainties of the  
future.

But let our peace and our faith be strengthened daily as we turn our hearts to the Lord and to the great truths of His Word!

"ABIDE IN CHRIST"  
or  
THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS  
John 15:1-10

Intro: The passage has probably had more and different interpretations than any other passage in the Gospel of John -- all the way from teaching that it is possible for us to lose our salvation to those who ignore the problems and pass over them in silence. This is the treatment given to this passage in many of the commentaries.

One thing that we can be sure of is that the passage has a meaning, a clear specific meaning. We can also be sure that this is an important passage because there is not a word in it that did not come from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

Our problem is that:

- 1) Either it does not say what we want it to say,
- 2) Or we have not examined this in the light of what we have in the Gospel of John itself as well as in the rest of Scripture.

Let us examine the passage carefully this morning and look to the Spirit of God to give us understanding of these words of our Saviour.

Let me begin with . . .

I. THE ELIMINATION OF ONE INTERPRETATION OF THIS PASSAGE.

IT DOES NOT TEACH THAT A TRULY SAVED PERSON CAN EVER BE LOST! We know this because Scripture does not contradict itself.

We have many strong passages, such as John 10:27-29, which make it clear that the salvation which the Lord gives can NEVER be lost.

So we can set aside that as a possible interpretation of John 15.

Secondly, let us look at . . .

II. THE MEANING OF TWO KEY WORDS IN THIS PASSAGE.

They are the words "abide" and "fruit."

A. "Abide."

It is found no less than 10 times in our text (once it is translated in v. 9, "continue").

It is a word which mean to continue, to remain, not to depart, to endure, to dwell, to abide, to last, not to perish.

In 1 John 2:24 John uses this word 3 times, and the King James translators have translated it in 3 different ways:

"Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father."

So the verb speaks, not of the kind of a person who comes to and goes from the Lord, but of the person who stays!

In John 2:19 we have an excellent description of what John warns us against, and also of the warnings issued by our Lord:

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

The Lord's work has always seen people coming, remaining for a while, and then going. Perhaps they come back again, but they do not stay. They profess to be Christians, and may live like Christians for years, but then something happens and they go -- never to return.

The parable of the Sower and the seed and the soil in Matthew 13 teaches this.

Note the similarity between our text in John 15 and our Lord's words in Matthew 7:13-27.

And -- what is one of the strongest arguments of all is the fact that these words were spoken by the Lord soon after Judas had gone out!

Thus, John 15:2a and 6 are warnings -- warnings which need to be given in the Church continually if the Lord would give such a warning to His disciples.

THIS PASSAGE TEACHES THE TRUTH THAT IF A PERSON IS TRULY A SAINT, HE WILL PERSEVERE AS A CHRISTIAN. He will continue on. He will not be the kind of a person who is here today, and gone tomorrow.

But now let us look at the second word:

B. "Fruit."

It is used 6 times, and you will note a progression from

"fruit" to "more fruit" to "much fruit."

What is fruit in the Bible?

From the Scriptures where fruit is mentioned, it can be said that:

- 1) Fruit is the result of God's life in us, and
  - 2) Fruit is the result of God's work through us.
1. God's life in us.
    - a. Holiness is a fruit (Rom. 6:22).
    - b. Righteousness is a fruit (Heb. 12:11; cf. Phil. 1:11).
    - c. "Love, joy, peace," etc. are "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 5:9).
  2. God's work through us.
    - a. Answered prayer (John 15:7, 8, 16; cf. Matt. 21:17-22).
    - b. Praise is fruit (Heb. 13:15).
    - c. Giving can result in fruit (Phil. 4:17).
    - d. Winning people to Christ (John 4:36; Rom. 1:13).
    - e. Building up believers in the faith (Phil. 1:22; cf. v. 25).

You would have seen none of these in the life of Judas. You might have seen what appeared to be fruit, but it it wasn't fruit.

A true believer will abide, not in order to be saved, but because he is saved. And it is this abiding relationship which results in fruit. And our Lord obviously teaches that the closer a believer abides, the more fruit there will be.

So this passage does deal with salvation, and it does show that the fruit is the proof that a person belongs to Christ.

Note from the words of our Lord,

### ~III. THREE GREAT TRUTHS THAT HAVE TO DO WITH OUR SALVATION.

- A. "I am the true vine," or, I am the vine, the true one. He is the only Source of all spiritual life and power.



It is not Christ among others, or Christ in addition to others, BUT CHRIST ALONE!

Salvation, and the fruit which results from salvation, are only to be found in an abiding relationship with Christ.

B. "And my Father is the husbandman," or, the vinedresser.

A vine needs a lot of constant work to make it produce fruit -- and it is only the Father's work which saves and makes us fruitful.

The Father sent His Son. He also sent the Holy Spirit. And this statement is a perfect illustration of Phil. 1:6.

C. The means of our salvation (John 15:3).

See John 13:10b. Salvation is through the Word of God, as Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed . . ."

D. Our own helplessness if left to ourselves.

This is brought out by two statements -- one in v. 4, and the other in v. 5:

- 1) "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself" (v. 4m).
- 2) "Without me ye can do nothing" (v. 5b).

This applies both to obtaining salvation and to bearing fruit after we are saved!

The fact that a person understands this and lives accordingly is one of the clearest evidences of salvation.

There are many other things that could be said about this passage, but let me close by giving from the words of our Lord . . .

IV. THE FRUIT THAT WE ARE TO LOOK FOR.

More can be added, but these which our Lord mentions are the basic ones.

A. A believer will give pre-eminence to the Word of God.

1. As being vital in our salvation (John 15:3).
2. In daily life -- "and my words abide in you" (John 15:7).
3. To be obeyed above everything else (John 15:10).

- B. A believer will give pre-eminence to Christ -- not to Christ as opposed to the Word, or to the Word without Christ, but to Christ and the Word, and to Christ in the Word.

He will respond to, "Abide in me, and I in you."

- C. A believer will pray, and will see his prayers answered.

This does not mean that they are all answered, or that they are answered immediately, but it does mean that to the extent that the Word of God governs his asking, he will see the answers to his prayers -- whatever he asks!

How do you measure up so far? Do you pray -- and are you seeing your prayers answered? How does the Word of God fit into your praying?

Finally, let me ask you to look at verse 8. This may have to do with answered prayer, but the reference to the glory of the Father suggest another truth. It certainly is to be found in other Scriptures, and it very probably is the main point here.

- D. A true believer glorifies the Father by manifesting the glorious attributes of the Father.

William Hendriksen says:

"The spiritual graces or fruits . . . which adorn the children of God reflect his own being. Accordingly, seeing himself (his communicable attributes) reflected in their lives, he is thereby glorified, and this especially when the fruits are bountiful . . . Thus those who, by God's grace, are already disciples become disciples more and more" (p. 302).

Concl: None of these fruits are to be seen in perfection in the life of any child of God. Our faults and our failures will be evident until we are finally transformed into the likeness of Christ. BUT DO NOT MINIMIZE THE FACT THAT THE FRUIT WILL BE THERE -- imperfect though it may be. And, if it is not there, then there is a strong possibility that the person under consideration is not really saved!

"Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16). May God search our hearts by His Word and then "lead us in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139:24b, where us is "me").

If you are truly saved, this will not upset you. If you are not saved, you need to be upset -- and then to turn to Christ to receive Him as your Saviour.

THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD JESUS  
John 15:11-17

Intro: In John 15 we have the Lord speaking of believers in three different relationships:

- 1) In their relationship to Himself (vv. 1-10).
- 2) In their relationship to each other, i.e., their fellow-believers (vv. 11-17).
- 3) In their relationship with the world (vv. 18-27).

{ All of these grow out of the first relationship.  
It is because of our relationship to Christ that we are to love each other. And it is because of our relationship to Christ that the world hates (or, rejects) us.

In our relationship to Christ -- we are to abide.  
In our relationship to each other (repeated from John 13:34, 35) -- we are to love.  
In our relationship to the world -- we are to witness (v. 27), but expecting rejection and even persecution.

The circumstances for the disciples at this time were not particularly encouraging. The disciples must have felt very lonely. It could have looked to them like all of their work was in vain. Our Lord's words to them about fruit may have appeared like a hopeless dream. BUT THESE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE WHAT INCREASE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR LORD'S WORDS.

Note first:

- I. A VERSE WHICH SEEMS TO POINT IN TWO DIRECTIONS -- BACKWARD (to what our Lord has been saying), AND FORWARD (to what He is going to say). See v. 11.

Here the Lord tells us basically three things:

- 1) That He wants His disciples (and all believers) to be joyful -- not giddy, or superficial, or selfishly looking only for that which they want, nor even that they would always be without tears or sorrow -- but joyful in their hearts regardless of their circumstances.
- 2) That their joy would be His joy -- "that my joy might remain in you" -- "remain" here not being our word, abide, but the verb to be, be in you as a constant, daily, abiding joy. It is not something that comes and goes.
- 3) That their joy would be "full" -- not only abounding, but also complete, perfect, needing nothing else to make it what it should be.

Cf. what Heb. 12:2 says about our Lord as He faced the cross and went to the cross. It was a "joy that was set before him." So the emphasis is upon what was being accomplished

on the cross -- just as the emphasis here points ultimately to the "fruit" that would "remain."

All of this means that this "joy" about which the Lord is speaking is a "joy" which results from abiding in Christ, and, in connection with what follows, a "joy" which results from believers loving each other.

Now let us look, in the second place, at . . .

II. THE ONE COMMANDMENT WHICH THE LORD SPECIFIES AS HIS OWN --  
"This is my commandment."

We have it in v. 12. And it is repeated in v. 17. And we should remember that this is all a repetition of what our Lord said in John 13:34, 35!

For it to be repeated  
undoubtedly indicates its importance,  
and probably means that it was very rare even among  
the disciples.

Not only were they to love each other, but they were to love each other just as (lit.) the Lord had loved them. This is what actually makes it impossible for us in ourselves -- and points to the absolute necessity of abiding in Christ like a branch abides in the vine.

And the importance of this is not only indicated by the fact that the Lord repeats this, but because He calls it "my commandment." Out of all that He could have chosen, this was His first choice!

1 Cor. 13:1-3 helps us to understand how really important "love" is -- especially our love for each other as fellow-believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Following this, the Lord seems to pick up the phrase, "as I have loved you," or even more literally, as I loved you -- pointing it seems to some particular thing in the past which was overwhelming evidence of the nature of the love of Christ.

Many things could be said in defining the expression, "as I have loved you," but the Lord points to one thing:

III. THE SUPREME EVIDENCE OF LOVE -- i.e., the kind of love that the Lord is talking about, and which He wants to be shown by His people for each other. See v. 13.

I read one commentator who really wanted to correct the Lord in what He had to say here. And it looked at first

like he had Scripture on his side. He said that it seems that it would be "greater love" to die for your enemies -- and is this not what Rom. 5:10 says?

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled . . ." And what about the latter part of Rom. 5:8?

" . . . while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

How can our Lord say both things? How can we be "enemies" and yet be "friends"? Are both true?

The answer is, "YES!"

Sin has made us the enemies of God, but God has looked upon those whom He is going to redeem as His friends. And this has always been the case.

Jeremiah can help us here.

Listen to Jer. 31:3,

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

It almost sounds like it had come from the Gospel of John, doesn't it?

Let me ask you a question: Which came first, according to Jeremiah, the love or the drawing? Or, to state it another way, the love or the saving?

Obviously the love was first. In fact, the love was eternal. Listen to the verse again. (Re-read Jer. 31:3 above.)

So the Lord manifested the greatest kind of love when, for those who were at enmity with Him, but who were also His "friends" from all eternity, He voluntarily gave Himself in giving up His life as a vicarious substitute for their sins. And then in actual experience they became "friends."

Note the idea of laying down His life in John 10:11, 15, 17, 18.

But now one final point remains in our text (apart from the repetition of the commandment in v. 17). It is this:

#### IV. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE LORD'S "FRIENDS" (John 15:14-16).

The point is this: If we are to love our fellow-believers, those who like us are the "friends" of the Lord, then how can we identify them? Who are they? It cannot be everybody who makes a claim to be -- because Judas would have fallen into that category. How can we know those whom the Lord is talking about when He says in v. 15, "but I have called you friends"?

Our Lord uses a word for "called" in v. 15 which means to style, or identify, someone as a friend. In vv. 14-16 we have three identifying marks of a friend of the Lord Jesus Christ.

— A. First, he is one who keeps the commandments of our Lord (v. 14).

He may not do this perfectly. There may be lapses in his obedience, but it is outstanding objective of his life that his living is directed by the Word of God.

Cf. 1 Jn.  
2:4.

He knows that the Lord is his Friend, but he also remembers that He is also his Lord. Therefore, the true believer recognizes the place of authority which the Lord has over him. And he obeys the commands, not because he always understands them, or even because it is the easiest way to go, but because the Lord has given them.

B. Second, he is one who manifests that he has an understanding of those things which our Lord has heard from the Father, and has revealed to him as one who is the Saviour's friend. Cf. v. 15.

— This has to do primarily with the Gospel and the Lord's work in salvation. It includes this Upper Room Discourse, and all of the other messages of the Gospel of John. The Lord's friends receive them and believe them and live in the light of them. As far as the message may be from what we think it should be, we who are the friends of God know them and believe them and love them.

Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

C. Third and finally, he is one who gives all of the glory for his salvation to the Lord. Cf. v. 16.

Our Lord certainly does not mean that we have not chosen to be saved, but he is indicating that the original choice was made by the Lord, that He took the initiative was taken by Him, and that we would never have chosen the Lord if the Lord had not chosen us first!

— And this choice is confirmed also by the accomplishment of two purposes:

- 1) There will be fruit -- not always, and not to the same degree, but FRUIT nevertheless (a most assuring word to the disciples at this time).

2) Prayer will be answered.

Note: The word "that" in "that ye should go . . ." and "that whatsoever ye shall ask . . ." are both the Greek word hina, indicating the purposes for which believers have been chosen.

Concl: The command is repeated in v. 17 before the Lord turns to deal with the third subject -- the relationship of the believer to the world.

Perhaps "command" here in v. 17 has a special meaning -- that is, the setting up of special conditions which cannot be changed.

Three questions:

- 1) Do we see these traits in our own lives?
- 2) Are these the things that we look for to help us in identifying those who really know the Lord, i.e., who are His "friends"?
- 3) Do we love one another the way the Lord loves us -- in a self-sacrificing way, giving ourselves to them, in obedience to the Word, and deliberately choosing the Lord's "friends" in preference to all other people on the earth?

THE BELIEVER AND THE WORLD

John 15:18-27

Intro: Anyone who has undertaken to study the NT seriously has probably discovered the writings of Dr. William Hendriksen.

For years now Dr. Hendriksen has been working on what he has called a New Testament Commentary. He is now in his eighties, and the work is almost completed (and may even be completed).

My reason for mentioning him has to do with the theme of my text for this morning: "the world."

In 1954 Dr. Hendriksen first published his commentary on the Gospel of John. Twenty-two years later, in 1976, his commentary on John was reprinted for the 7th time!

Each time a book is re-published the author usually has the privilege of correcting or adding to his previous publication to make it more accurate, or to bring it up-to-date.

I have a copy of his 7th printing. In it he makes a statement which he undoubtedly made in his first printing and which he saw no reason to change. It is this, speaking of the term, "the world":

"No attempt has been made to classify all the passages in which the term occurs."

What does he mean?

He means that no one has actually done any exhaustive work, studying the word, "world," as it is used in Scripture, and then listing the various ways it is used and the various meanings that it has.

It is true that sometimes it is very difficult in any certain text to come up with the exact meaning of the word, "world," but it is really too bad that apparently no one has really done this job which really needs to be done.

This word is very important in the study of the Gospel of John. We were introduced to it in John 1 -- vv. 9, 10 (read).

While we still wait for that study, it is good to know that much work has been done on it. And any student of the Word can with some study see that there are three prominent ways in which the word "world" is used. Here they are:

- 1) It is used of the created world -- the earth.
- 2) It is used of the inhabited world -- the people who are in world at any given point in time.
- 3) It is used of a Satanic system, centered in the world, ruled



over by Satan, opposed to God and dedicated to to the complete alienation from God of all of the peoples of the world.

In John 16:11 our Lord is referring to Satan when he speaks of "the prince of this world."

Paul is speaking of him also in 2 Cor. 4:4 when he says that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest . . ."

It is this world that Paul also has in mind when he writes in Rom. 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world . . ."

It is this world that John has in mind when he writes in 1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . ."

It is this world that James has in mind when he writes in James 4:4, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

And this is the world that the Lord is speaking about in our text in John 15.

It is a world of which we once were a part. It is a world out of which the Lord has chosen His people. It is a world which remains the same today -- and stands unalterably opposed to the Gospel and to the people of God. The Lord has left us where we are exposed to this world, and yet we as believers are to go to those who still are a part of this God-less, Satanic, evil system, to bear witness to people throughout the world concerning Christ and the Gospel -- a Person the world hates, and a message which the world hates.

In fact, one writer has said,

" . . . the Gospel cannot be published without instantly driving the world to rage. Consequently, it will never be possible for godly teachers to avoid the hatred of the world" (Calvin, Vol. XVIII, p. 123).

Take all of these facts (and many other details which could be added to them), and look at the situation which we see in the world today.

You would almost believe that these verses about the world are no longer true. What has happened (and remember that we must base our judgments on what is found in the Word of God)?

The first thing that we see is that there has been a joining

together of the professing church and the world. We see this in the friendship that exists between the two. We see it in the way in which leaders in the church are honored in the world -- even often recognized as among the most popular people for a given year (a position which the Lord Jesus Christ could never have held).

We see it in the church's methods. Notice how quickly the church takes up, for example, the idea of Jerry Lewis' 24-hour telethon, or a march of some kind where Christians will go even to unsaved people to get them to sponsor them for so much a mile or for so much an hour! If something makes money in the world, there is always someone who wants to bring it into the church regardless of what the Bible teaches about the ways in which God supplies the needs of His people.

We see it in the church's message.

Read church history and you will see how far we have departed from the preaching of a Gospel that is an offense to men. We preach instead of the Gospel of God's grace a Gospel which has more human psychology in it than Bible. Instead of talking about how sinful men are, and what their sin has done to them in their relationship to God, we talk about how great man is and what potential he has if he is only channeled into the right way.

We spend far more time talking about men than we do about God. Even for Christians, preaching like our Lord did in John 15 is not popular -- that without Him we can do nothing! We are not being given a proper understanding of God, and so we have distorted views of salvation, and distorted views of sin!

I came across a verse the other day which expresses the idea of God which many people have. It goes like this:

The universe He fain would save,  
But longs for what He cannot have;  
We, therefore, worship, praise, and laud  
A DISAPPOINTED, HELPLESS GOD.

We see it also in the lives of the Lord's people. Where are the voices of men of God who exhort us to live in separation from the world. And, if you were ask the average professing Christian what this means, who could tell you? Who pays any attention these days to verses like 2 Cor. 6:17, 18?

I could say a lot more, but this perhaps will be enough to give us a present-day background for these words of our Lord Jesus Christ which we are ignoring today and trying to act as though they were no longer true.

In a day when the true message and mission of the Church is more

needed than at any time in human history, what do we see? Instead of a Church that is distinctly different from the world, we have a Church that is being taught that, if you want to win men to Christ, you have to be like they are.

Let us pay particular attention to these words of the Lord Jesus in our text. Remember that they are His words -- words which He would not change if He were to speak them for the first time this morning, words which the Church must know and observe if we are to have the blessing of God and are to be used to turn people in our generation to the Lord!

The first thing we have is:

I. A SOBERING STATEMENT OF FACT (John 15:18).

Nobody can change this. We can expect to receive no better treatment from the world than the Lord Jesus received.

II. THE REASONS WHY THIS IS TRUE (John 15:19-25).

How good the Lord is to tell us these things! If your heart is open to what the Lord is saying here, it can have a transforming effect on the way you live and the way in which you serve the Lord.

Listen to the reasons for the enmity between the world, on the one hand, and the Church on the other.

A. Because we who know the Lord are "not of the world" (John 15:19).

And why are we "not of the world"? Because the Lord has "chosen" us out of the world. We did not take ourselves out. Not only was that impossible, but the Bible makes it clear that no one left to himself wants out. Whenever you see a person wanting out, wanting to be saved, it is always because of what God is doing in his heart.

But what does this mean -- that we are "not of the world" as the Lord mentions again in John 17:14?

It means that our way of life is different,  
our purpose in living is different,  
even we are different!

We love God; the people of the world do not. We want to please Him; the people of the world do not. We respect His Word; the people of the world do not. Everything is different, and the two cannot be reconciled (even though Christians are continually trying to do so by compromise).

- B. Because we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are His servants (John 15:20).

Therefore, we have no right to expect any better treatment from the world than our Lord received -- and the world nailed Him to the cross!

Our Lord had mentioned this earlier in John 13:16.

- C. Because the world does not know God (John 15:21).

They may claim that they do because a favorite point that even the world tries to make is that it is possible to know God without knowing Jesus Christ.

This is basic to a one-world religion that seeks to include all of the religions of the world. But the god they claim to know and serve is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- D. Because the world despises the doctrine of Scripture (John 15:22).

Notice the word, "spoken."

The Lord does not mean that the world had no sin until He came, but that the world's sin was intensified and they were left entirely without excuse because of what the Lord had taught them!

- E. Because, as a result of what Jesus Christ taught, the world not only hates Christ, but they had God the Father also (John 15:23).

- F. Because they were condemned by the works which the Lord Jesus did (John 15:24).

The world cannot deny that Jesus Christ performed miracles, but in their unbelief they will try to divert attention from the miracle to the fact that it was performed on the Sabbath Day!

Others (especially since Christ's day) do try to explain them away in some natural way.

And finally, in the reasons the Lord gives here, the world hates Christ and His people . . .

- G. Because the OT Scriptures said that this would be the case (John 15:25; cf. Psa. 35:19; 69:4).

Note the unreasonableness of unbelief!

SO -- what are we to do? What is the answer to reaching the world with the Gospel? The situation looks hopeless. But is it?

Note carefully the last two verses of our text. The answer is to be found in . . .

### III. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 15:26, 27).

That which we are to do in the world and with the world is the very thing that the world does not want -- witnessing of Christ!

The world may listen if our message has to do with how good people can be better, or how they can have peaceful lives without really changing anything that they are doing, or how they can be more successful, or popular. BUT THE WORLD DOES NOT WANT TO HEAR ABOUT SIN, OR ABOUT A SAVIOUR, OR ABOUT THE CROSS, OR ABOUT DIVINE JUDGMENT, OR THAT SALVATION IS A WORK OF GOD (and not a work of man -- even in part).

Therefore, how is anybody else in the world going to be brought to salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here we have our Lord's answer:

- A. First of all, our Lord points the Apostles away from themselves -- TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. Cf. John 15:26a.

He is a Person -- one of the members of the Godhead. This is important to know because it means that the work of witnessing requires divine power!

And His coming is so significant that both the Father and the Son are involved in His coming.

And when He comes, He comes as "the Comforter," the Paraclete, the One Who is called to our side.

And this leads me to say that everything in our text, in fact, everything in this chapter is encouraging and was spoken by the Lord for the encouragement of His people then and now! It is encouraging for us to know what the world is like so that we will not expect the wrong response and so we will see what is needed in our relationship with the world.

- B. Secondly, notice what the Holy Spirit does. "He shall testify of ME" (John 15:26b).

The world does not want to hear of Christ. The world hates Christ. But the Spirit of God bears witness of Him anyway!

And be sure to notice this: ALL EFFECTIVE WITNESSING COMES ULTIMATELY FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT -- not from us. We often forget this in our methods and plans for winning people to Christ.

And then finally -- notice:

C. "And ye also shall bear witness . . ." (John 15:27).

Our witness is absolutely vital. God has made us His instruments. But we go as witnesses, depending upon the Holy Spirit to honor the Word, to turn the hearts of people in the world to the Lord Jesus Christ that they might be saved.

Ours is the task of witnessing. The Lord takes His own Word and through the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit uses His Word to accomplish His own eternal purposes. This is the only way that people will ever truly be brought to Christ. They may respond to our appeals without the Holy Spirit, but they can never really be saved apart from the Spirit's work.

Concl: Don't you find the greatest possible encouragement in these words?

God is saving those whom He has chosen. We are His witnesses and the Holy Spirit does the work. May God enable us to see that only in God's way can God's work be done, and that He does it in such a way that all of the glory belongs to Him!

THE PROMISE OF JOY  
John 16:16-24

Intro: In these verses the Lord is clearly dealing with the subject of JOY. You can see it in verses 20, 21, 22, 24.

The Lord had spoken of JOY in John 15:11. It was obviously His purpose that His disciples would have JOY. "JOY" we are told in Gal. 5:22 is a part of "the fruit of the Spirit."

In fact, the Bible is so full of teaching regarding JOY that there can be do doubt but that the Lord wants His people to be a happy, rejoicing people!

This does not mean, however, that for the child of God there will be only JOY.

The Lord had His sorrows.

Concerning His disciples we have His statement in the passage we considered last week in John 16:6,

"But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart."

There were many trials yet to come for all of the disciples. But, nevertheless, the Lord clearly promises them JOY -- and it is this JOY that we want to consider this morning from the words of the Lord Jesus in the words found in our text.

The passage begins with . . .

I. A SIMPLE STATEMENT which caused great confusion in the minds of the Apostles (John 16:16).

In seeking to explain it, we find a great deal of variety among Bible expositors. All agree that the expression, "A little while, and ye shall not see me," speaks of His coming death and burial. But there is a great difference of opinion as to what He meant when He said, "and again, a little while, and ye shall see me."

Generally speaking there are three interpretations:

- 1) First, that seeing Him again was a reference to His resurrection -- and that the disciples would see Him prior to His ascension.
- 2) Others link this with what the Lord had just said about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and they say that this refers to the way the Lord revealed Himself through the Spirit's ministry on the Day of Pentecost, and afterwards.
- 3) A third group of expositors make this a prophecy of the

return of the Lord at the close of the present age.

I personally prefer both the first and the third views. Our Lord was probably speaking in a special way to the disciples, but it also has its application to believers of all generations from that day to this!

It is stated later that, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20b). But we can certainly see also that complete joy will not be possible until the Lord returns.

But let us notice secondly . . .

II. THE CONFUSION OF THE DISCIPLES -- and their apparent hesitation to ask Him what He meant (John 16:17, 18).

The expression, "because I go to the Father," in v. 16, is omitted in some translations because it is not in some manuscripts, but its use in v. 17 probably means that it also belongs in v. 16.

They did not at this point understand His teaching concerning His death and resurrection, and so this is why they were confused.

It illustrates how much we need the Lord to explain His Word to us.

It probably also pictures our hesitation to go to the Lord for instruction, just as the disciples were hesitant to ask the Lord what He meant.

But then we come, finally, to . . .

III. THE LORD'S EXPLANATION (John 16:19-24).

Note how the Lord interprets the effect of seeing the Lord, or not seeing the Lord. This was what determined their JOY or LACK OF JOY.

He mentions "joy" three times: vv. 20 (with v. 21), 22, 24.

However, before we look at these passages, let us ask the question, What do we mean by "joy"? Or better yet, What did the Lord mean by "joy"?

Often we get the idea that the Scriptural teaching about JOY is that we can expect a life without trials and without troubles. But that is certainly not the case as we can see from our text.



Others think that it means a constant feeling of elation -- like the young man who said that he used to get high on drugs, but now he was high on Jesus!!!

If this is what we think Christian joy is, we are going to be sadly disappointed, and overwhelmed with discouragement when we fail to achieve such an abiding experience.

Mr. Webb-Peploe, a Church of England minister, who ministered with Miss Amy Carmichael in India earlier in this century said on one occasion,

"Joy is not gush; joy is not jolliness. Joy is simply perfect acquiescence in God's will, because the soul delights itself in God Himself" (Gold by Moonlight, p. 74).

Joy is to take pleasure in God and so to find contentment and delight even when one's circumstances are far from what a person might desire.

The Lord gives three essential characteristics or means of joy in the passage before us this morning.

- A. First of all, true joy is not separated from sorrow, but is the result of sorrow (v. 20).

When you link this with v. 21 you can see that sorrow in the life of a child of God has a good purpose like pain experienced by a mother prior to the birth of her child.

And the particular kind of sorrow that the Lord seems to be talking about here is that sorrow that comes from the apparent withdrawal of the Lord's presence.

You run across this many times in the Psalms. Even Job said,

"Oh that I knew where I might find him!  
that I might come even to his seat!  
"I would order my cause before him,  
and fill my mouth with arguments.  
"I would know the words which he would  
answer me,  
and understand what he would say unto me"  
(Job 23:3-5).

The Puritans called such times, God's desertions.

God withdraws our consciousness of His presence even though we know that He will never actually

leave us nor forsake us!

BUT OUT OF THIS COMES BLESSINGS WHICH WE NEVER KNEW WERE POSSIBLE -- WHEN SORROW IS TURNED INTO JOY!

Related to this to:

- 1) Our experience now.
- 2) The joy that will be ours at the coming of the Lord.

Cf. 1 Peter 1:6, 7, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season . . ."

- B. The permanence of our joy (v. 22).

People cannot take it from us. It is not dependent upon our circumstances. It does not come and go. The verse clearly shows that it abides because of what we find in Him.

- C. The perfection of our joy (v. 24).

Cf. Psa. 16:11,

"Thou will shew me the path of life;  
in thy presence is fulness of joy;  
at thy right hand  
there are pleasures for evermore."

But this comes in answer to prayer -- and specifically asking the Father in the Name of the Son!

Here we see one of the major reasons for our trials -- to draw us away from our dependence upon (1) ourselves and (2) our circumstances, and to make us realize that we can only live the life of joy by trusting in the Father and by calling upon Him in the Name of the Son.

Concl: Obviously, the point of our passage this morning is not that you and I are to seek to be happy, but that we are to seek the Lord continually and to realize that in the enjoyment of His presence (both now and eternally) we find our permanent and perfect JOY!