

TUESDAY BIBLE CLASS

A Study in John 13-17

John 16:7-33

February 18, 2008

Intro: In these last two chapters of The Upper Room Discourse we have seen that in the first seventeen verses of John 15 the Lord spoke to them about their relationship to Himself. He was the true vine, and they were the branches. This spoke of their living union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the source of their life and essential to them for fruit bearing. The Lord's exhortation to them was, "Abide in Me, and I in you.."

Beginning with John 15:18 and going to 16:6 the Lord spoke to His apostles about their relationship with the world. It would not be congenial, but hostile. But, nevertheless, this was to be their place of ministry, their mission field.

Now as we come to the latter part of chapter 16, we have in verses 7 through 15 the apostles' relationship with the Holy Spirit. There are many other passages in the NT that deal with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in this present age, but this passage is surely basic, foundational.

At the risk of repeating too often what the Lord has said about the Holy Spirit in this Upper Room discourse, I think that it will be profitable for us to review the passages in which the Lord referred to the Holy Spirit up to this point. Here they are:

- 1) John 14:16-17.
- 2) John 14:26.
- 3) John 15:26-27.
- 4) And now we come to the fourth and last: John 16:7-15.

There is only one other time that this word, **παράκλητος**, or Paraclete as it can be transliterated into English, and that is in 1 John 2:1 where it is translated, Advocate. He has been called by the Father (and by the Son) to be our Helper in all that He has been sent to do for those of us in whom He dwells – which includes all who are believers in this age, or dispensation.

We have seen that the Lord distinguished in speaking about the Holy Spirit in His relationship to the people of God before Pentecost (Acts 2), as compared with His relationship with the people of God after Pentecost, when He said, "for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 15:17). The Holy Spirit had been active in the world since creation, and had at times had been filled with the Holy Spirit. The whole OT was written under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But after the ascension of Christ and on the Day of Pentecost a few days later, in Acts 2, the Church was born, the people of God were baptized by the Holy Spirit, and from that day until this every believer in Christ has been permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. So this whole period leading up to the death of Christ, followed by His burial, His resurrection, and His ascension, followed by the gift of the Holy Spirit, was a time a tremendous change and great importance to all of the people of God.

From John 16:16 on to the end of chapter 16 we have our Lord closing words of encouragement and clarification as He finished His message to them.

So here we have:

I. THE APOSTLES' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 16:7-15).

(I say, the Apostles' relationship, because these words were first spoken to them, but we know that all of this applies just as much to the people of God throughout this present age.)

16:7 The words of this verse come "on the heels" of what the Lord had said to His disciples in verse 6. What

He had said to them about His departure, had made them sad. But He knew that they did not know that it was for their sakes that He was going away. We might agree with the apostles that there would be nothing better than to have the Lord Jesus physically present. We usually have a greater appreciation for what we can see than we do for what we can't see. Lenski says in his commentary that "I tell you the truth" was a "strong formula" by which He "intended to drive out some of this sorrow . . . to make room for what Jesus wants to put in its place" (*The Interpretation of Saint John's Gospel*, p.1079). The "I" is emphatic. They did not understand all that the Lord had taught them, but, if they had stopped to think, "This is the Lord speaking to us, and we know that He would never tell us anything but the truth," their attitude would have been completely different. For further emphasis, the Lord did not just say, "I tell you truth," but "I tell you the truth. We often forget this in reading our Bibles, especially in times of trouble. The Word of God is eternally true, and that should be especially evident when we are reading what the Lord Jesus Himself has said.

"It is expedient for you" – This means that it is to your advantage; it is better for you, it is for your good. Why was it better. Well, the Lord Himself gives us one answer: "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." That speaks of the divine plan which included the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But just why the Holy Spirit could not come until the Lord Jesus returned to heaven, we have to admit with Bishop Ryle that we do not know.

Another answer as to why it would be better for the Lord to go and for the Holy Spirit to come, would be that the Holy Spirit, being incorporeal, without a human body, could indwell all believers, but the Lord corporeal, with a body, would be like we are, able to be only one place at a time. This is the way we would think, but we don't have the ability to say what is not distinctly revealed in Scripture. If we read the Gospels carefully, there are times when there are evidences that the Lord used some of His attributes that He did not exercise for most of the time that he was here, such as knowing what men were thinking. So we cannot really say why it was better for the apostles that He go away and for the Holy Spirit to come. All of the members of the Godhead have all of the same attributes. I think that the best answer to the question as to why it was better for the Lord to leave and for the Holy Spirit to come is that because the Lord said that it was better. Believing the Word always leads eventually to greater understanding of what has been written.

"But if I depart, I will send Him unto you." Notice this is a promise, which our Lord called "the promise of the Father." It was when the Lord was with a small group of His disciples just before He ascended back to heaven that He said what is recorded for us in Acts 1:4-6

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. We can say that the whole plan of salvation was worked out before time began. The Father had His part in choosing those who would be saved. The Son was the One Who would come to earth as a Man to offer Himself as a sacrifice for those whom the Father had chosen. It was the work of the Spirit to do in the world, and with the people of God, as we are learning in this passage about the Holy Spirit in John 16. So it was evident that there would not be a long period of time between the ascent of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Before we leave verse 7 I want to call your attention to a prepositional phrase that is used two times in this verse. It is the phrase, "unto you." The Lord said, "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." I emphasize this because I believe "unto you" is to be carried over into the first part of verse 8, "And when He is come" (unto you, understood).

16:8 The Holy Spirit is not just coming into the world, but He is coming "unto you" – to permanently

indwell the people of God. Then continuing on in the verse, “And when He is come *unto you*, He will *through you* reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” It was always in the plan and purpose of God, but especially in New Testament times, that His people would be the primary agents in the spread of the Gospel to a lost, dying, evil world. We spread the Gospel by the lives that we live, and by the verbal testimony we give concerning the Gospel.

This ought to take us back to what the Lord said in verses 22 and 24 of John 15 about sin. All people are sinners because we were all born in sin. There are many kinds of sin. We can thank God that no one has committed all of them (although some are such terrible sinners that they might come close to being charged with them all. We need to talk about sin to people, particular sins, because all are under the judgment of God because of sin. This is the major thing that is wrong with our country. We aggravate our condition before God by persisting in that which is sinful in God’s sight. This has been true of all of the nations of the earth, and all who die without Christ will suffer the punishment of an eternal hell.

In the Bible we read about Paul who in his journeys went to Athens to preach the Gospel. On Mars’ Hill he laid the truth of the Gospel before that Greeks who loved to hear anything new, anything that they had not heard before. Here is a portion of what Luke recorded about the message that Paul preached on that particular day. If you want to follow me in your Bibles, **I am reading Acts 17:22-33**. I want you to notice especially verses 30 and 31. (Read again.) Not what Paul said about the Lord, that He “now commandeth all men every where to repent.”

Now we all know that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” that “there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecc. 7:20). “There is none righteous, no not one” (Rom. 3:10; Psa. 14:1-3; 53:1-3). Since God commands all men everywhere to repent, this adds the major sin to all of a person’s other sins, and leaves him who hears the Gospel more condemned than before because he has not accepted the only remedy for sin that there is.

What does the word “reprove” mean? It means to convince, to convict, and to admonish.

16:9 A lot of preachers today don’t use the word *sin* because people don’t like to hear it. It has practically been eliminated from the English language in America, and probably in most English speaking nations. But let me tell you not that the Holy Spirit is not afraid to speak about sin, and neither will we be if we know what our mission is. If the Holy Spirit is dealing with a person about salvation, that person is going to be convicted that he is a sinner, and that his sin condemns him to hell if he does not believe the Gospel and put his faith in Christ. The big question for every sinner is, “Are you trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins?” The Holy Spirit knows that there is only one way to escape the judgment of God, and that is through the sacrifice which the Lord Jesus offered to God when He offered Himself for the sins of the world. The Apostle Paul said, and said very truthfully, that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and Paul added, “Of whom I am chief.”

Paul didn’t argue with those men in Athens trying to prove that they were sinners. He simply, but powerfully, presented the Gospel, and left it with the Lord as to what those men would do with the Gospel. How wonderful it is that God sent the Holy Spirit to make us know that we are sinner, unable to help ourselves, and unable to get help from anyone else except our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how deadly is the sin of unbelief!

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But we need to see that even though the world does not like to use the word *sin*, yet they know that there is

such a blight on society the world around, regardless of what they call it. And we see sin, flagrant sin, on the increase in our generation. The world tries to fight it by making laws against it, by psychology and counseling, by seeking to reward good behavior. But apart from the Gospel the people of the world refuse to recognize the deadly nature of sin. There is only one remedy for sin, and that is repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Law of Moses has proved that law in any form is not a remedy for sin. Only Christ is the remedy. And so not to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of salvation on the Cross, is what Lenski calls, “the capital sin” (*Op. cit.*, p. 1083). Again cf. John 15:22, 24.

So the real issue here is not that sin is sin, but that the condemning sin is a failure to believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the sin of sins, the sin that leaves people under the judgment of God with no other prospect than to spend eternity in hell.

But this is not all that the Holy Spirit convicts people about.

16:10 Bring that same word “reprove” down here as the Lord introduced the word “righteousness.” This is what we sinners need, but what we do not have. It cannot be earned. It cannot be purchased. It is dependent upon two great biblical truths: 1) that Jesus was the holy and eternal Son of God; and 2) that His work on the Cross included all that the Father sent Him to do. The forgiveness of sin alone is not sufficient. We need to have a new standing before God. This is what Jesus went to the Cross to secure for those who believe in Christ. “Because I go to my Father, and ye see Me no more.” This was a prediction of His coming ascension which was to be preceded by our Lord’s death, and resurrection. What could have kept Jesus from returning to the Father? Just one thing: if He had not finished the work which the Father gave Him to do. The fact that He is in heaven today, seated at the Father’s right hand, means that He finished the work that the Father gave Him to do, and that the Father is perfectly satisfied with the work that His Son had done in offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice for all who believe in Him. This is why the Apostle Paul could write,

21 For He [the Father] hath made Him [the Son] sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him [the Son] (2 Cor. 5:21).

The Apostle Peter expressed it this way in 1 Peter 3:18:

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just [the Righteous] for the unjust [the unrighteous], that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

What did the resurrection and ascension of Christ prove about Him? Paul gave that information to us in the first verses of his letter to the church at Rome. Listen to Paul’s words in Rom 1:1-6:

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.

So this is our assurance that the Lord Jesus was still righteous, that after “being made sin for us,” He “put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26), and has returned to the Father as “Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

So the Holy Spirit’s mission is to convince people in the world that unbelief in Jesus is the sin of sins, and that Jesus is back with the Father, as evidence that He is still the same Son of God, and that His work on the Cross

is completely acceptable to God. But there is still one more aspect to the Spirit's ministry to the world. This we have in John 16:11.

16:11 The Holy Spirit will convince the world that by the work of Christ on the Cross, that "the prince of this world is judged."

Charles Erdman of the old Princeton Seminary, wrote the following words about this verse:

The specific judgment in mind is that of the Devil. At the Cross he massed all his forces; there he suffered his eternal defeat. His doom was settled and his sentence pronounced. Every time Christ is preached, under the power of the Holy Spirit, Satan suffers some further loss, and every saved soul is a new proof of his "judgment" (p. 138).

This is what the Apostle Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim 2:24-26

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,
25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;
26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

The work of Christ on the Cross would have been incomplete without this. He not only had to pay the penalty of sin for those who would be saved, but He had to provide for them a standing of perfect righteousness for all who believe in Jesus. And He had to defeat the Devil, the prince and god of this world, setting His people free from Satan's power and bondage which is specifically designed to keep sinners from even hearing the Gospel. Cf. 2 Corinthians 4:3-6:

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:
4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.
5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.
6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

So it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to convince and to convict the world of the total ability of God through the Gospel to save all who believe in Christ. It is our job to spread the Gospel; it is the work of the Holy Spirit to determine where the preaching of the Gospel will be effective.

How wonderful it is to see a person of the world, through the preaching of the Gospel, to become convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and, in addition, to be convicted that the Gospel is just what he needs for his own salvation. It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul spoke of the Gospel as "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," the only message for either Jew or Gentile at any time and at any place on the face of the earth. There is no other Savior. There never has been, and there never will be.

Having spoken to the apostles about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the world, *through* them, at this point He turned to speak of the ministry of the Holy Spirit *to* them.

16:12 At the point the Lord turned from speaking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the world to speak about the Spirit's ministry to the apostles. But these same teachings apply just as much to us today as it did to the apostles in that day.

We have already seen that the revelation of the truth of God in Scripture is progressive. Here the Lord

emphasized that the apostles' knowledge of the Word is also progressive. Not all of you will get the same things out of what I have been saying this morning. The important thing for all of us is to seek to understand what the Lord has given to each of us where we are now in our understanding of the truth of God's Word. But we must always keep in mind that there is more for us to learn. If some things which you are reading in your Bible are not clear, or if you have difficulties in understanding what you are taught at church, just persevere. The truth will eventually become clearer and clearer to all of us. There is always more for all of us to learn. I believe that what the Lord was saying here was that the Bible was not yet complete. *I do not believe that the Lord was saying that we can or should expect extra-Biblical revelations in addition to what God has given us in His Word.* In Acts 1, verse 3, we are told that during the forty days that the Lord was with His disciples after His resurrection, He spent much of that time "speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Quite evidently after the resurrection those early believers were given truth that they were better prepared to receive than they would have been before the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection.

My father-in-law was a great business man, but he was not a musician. But he liked to go to symphony concerts. One time Lucille was with him and mother at a concert in Santa Barbara. The people all around him were obviously enjoying the concert, and at different times would applaud the musicians. Evidently this confused him a little bit because he turned to Lucille, and said, "Do you think these people are getting something out of this that I'm not getting?"

I am sure that often we have people who come to our services and are disappointed because we just sing hymns, have prayer, and somebody teaches us from the Word. We have our share of one-timers; they come once, but never come back. Probably some of them are not even Christians, but there are a lot of Christians who feel that way. They want to be entertained. They want lots of music, but not necessarily a lot of hymns. They want the preacher to be funny. They have not been trained to go to church to learn what is in the Bible. And I am sure there are many who would ask my father-in-law's question about our services: "Do you think that these people around me are getting something out of all of this Bible teaching that I am not getting?"

We learn spiritual truth a little at a time. The Lord knows where we are in our understanding of the Word. The important thing is for us to keep learning, even a little bit at a time. Keep reading. Keep listening to the Word taught and preached. Keep learning. The Lord feeds us as He knows we are prepared to receive it. When the Lord first began to teach the apostles about His death, they did not understand what He was talking about. But He keep teaching them, and eventually they were teaching the very same truths that had been a problem to them the first time they heard them.

The Lord told His disciples, "But ye cannot bear them now." The verb *bear* means *to carry*. Those of us who teach the Word, need to remember this. We all have limits as far as the truth is concerned. The Holy Spirit knows where we all are in our knowledge of the truth, and so He measures it out to us as we are able to take it. After all, we don't feed a baby on beef steak. I saw on the label of a honey jar the other day that honey is not to be fed to babies under one year old. Let us remember this about our own intake of the Word. The more we learn, the more we are capable of learning.

But I am sure that here the Lord was talking about the books which would make up the rest of the New Testament. But I think that Bishop Ryle was right when he said that the Lord was not talking here in verse 12 about how some of the apostles would be used to write the remainder of the NT, but he was speaking about their on personal knowledge and understanding of the truth.

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The Apostle Peter has a very interesting statement about the prophets of the OT and the books which they were

directed by the Holy Spirit to write. These are Peter's words which are found in 1 Peter 1:10-11:

10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

This means that there were some things, probably many things, which the writers of the OT did not understand as they wrote. And so they had to study their own writings under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But this was not as prominent in the OT as it is with us today in the NT.

16:13 The word "howbeit" is the translation of the common Greek word for *but*, *δέ*. The idea is, if the Lord is going away, how would the disciples possibly know, or even have access, to what the Lord wanted to say to them. And that is where the ministry of the Holy Spirit comes in.

Notice that the Holy Spirit is a Person, "*He*." And the Lord calls Him, "the Spirit of truth." Of course, this does not mean all kinds of truth, but especially the truth of the Word of God, of which, we must say, He is the Author. There have been some forty writers of Scripture, but Scripture only has one Author, "the Spirit of truth."

"Is come" has to mean when He comes to indwell them and never to leave them, to abide with them forever. "He will guide you into all truth." Matthew Henry compared this guidance to the way the Lord guided the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. They had light all of the way, the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The Spirit of God would be on hand twenty-four hours of every day the world around! You are never told to call back at regular business hours. Think of what this means with the people of God around the whole world. Whenever we are reading the Word, or meditating on what we have read, even when we are memorizing Scripture, or reading some book about Scripture, the Holy Spirit is with us to guide us into the truth. Even the fact that when you are reading according to some schedule, you come to a passage that ministers to you according to your need at that particular time, that is not just by chance. The Spirit of God guides us to the right place in the Word just when we need it.

But notice the next words. "He shall not speak of Himself." The Greek says, "He shall not speak *from* Himself." The Lord had just said in verse 12, "I have many things to say unto you." So, although the Lord was leaving His disciples, He would continue to teach them through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. " whatsoever He shall hear." He is listening to the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit teaches the apostles, or us, some of those things that the Lord wanted to say to them, or to us.

We noticed earlier in the Gospel of John that the Lord did not come to do His own will, but the will of the Father Who had sent Him. See John 6:38. We ought to know that the will of the Lord Jesus was not different from the Father's will. But the Lord was emphasizing His own submission to the Father's will. In the same way, when the Lord Jesus tells the Holy Spirit what to tell us, the Holy Spirit is not doing anything that He doesn't want to do. He is in full agreement with the Lord in what He should teach the people of God. There is always perfect agreement between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in anything that any One of Them does. In the same way, we ought to be in agreement with everything we see in the Word. Every bit of truth that we understand, we understand because it is what the Holy Spirit has taught us. We need to be careful that we have the full teaching of the Word on any subject. That is where our responsibility comes in.

Now, among all that the Holy Spirit would teach the apostles, a major part has to do with "things to come." Now this would have to do with prophetic truth, and here the Lord must have been thinking about what Paul and Peter and Jude and John, especially, would write. As you sit here today, the Holy Spirit is ministering to us

all. I have often seen certain truths more clearly as I have been teaching. I have also had people speak to me about things that they have understood from my teaching, and they may have been facets of truth that I did not have in mind. We need always to read the Bible, and to hear it taught, or in reading a book by Dr. Jerry Bridges or some other godly writer, with the idea that we are absolutely dependent upon the Holy Spirit for our ability to understand the truth. I am just as dependent upon the Holy Spirit for my understanding of the truth of the Word as I was sixty years ago when I finished my Seminary training.

But now as we come to John 16:14 we are to learn the special subject of the Spirit's teaching.

16:14 "He shall glorify Me." I have often said that the glory of God is God. The Apostle John wrote in the first chapter of his Gospel,

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Paul wrote in that verse in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." When God created man, He made man in the image and likeness of God." But through sin that image and likeness has been marred. And man is not able to restore it, nor does he give any real evidence of wanting to restore it. However, in the Gospel that image of God's glory is being restored. The object of our salvation is that God through the Gospel has predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of His Son"(Rom. 8:29). And last Sunday night Pastor Will brought us to that verse at the end of 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18, where we read,

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

And the Apostle John wrote in the third chapter of his first epistle,

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:1-3).

Now, when John said, "We beheld His glory," speaking of Christ, what did He mean? He meant that He and the other apostles came to realize that Jesus was truly the Son of God. They saw in Him attributes, characteristics which they have never seen in any other. They heard Him teach as no other man had ever taught. They saw Him perform miracles that were above and beyond what any other miracles had ever done. They saw in Him "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

So for the Holy Spirit to glorify Jesus means that it is His ministry to convince people that Jesus of Nazareth was truly God, the Son, that He was both a real Man and absolute Deity. That is the initial ministry of the Holy Spirit concerning Jesus. And if you are really convinced of the absolute Deity of Jesus, so that you have no hesitation in calling Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, then you can know that the Holy Spirit has glorified Jesus in your mind and heart.

But to glorify Christ has another very important meaning. It means not only that you know Who He is, but that you believe in Him, you are trusting Him, you love Him, you worship Him, you rejoice in Him, you submit yourself to Him, and you make it the habit of your life to obey Him. You may not do any of those things perfectly, but all of that is in your heart and nobody will ever be able to turn you away from Him.

So the Holy Spirit's ministry is to convince people, and it will the elect, that Jesus is the Son of God, that believing in Him means eternal life, and that you want all that you do to glorify Him. Oh, how much is in those

word, “He shall glorify Me.” I hope those words mean more to you than they ever have before.

But let us go on in verse 14 for in the remainder of this verse our Lord tells us how the Holy Spirit would glorify Him. Note what our Lord said. “For He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” It is the Holy Spirit’s ministry to show Christ to us, as He had done with the apostles. What does the word “shew,” or as we spell it today, show, mean? The word the Lord used here is the Greek word ἀναγγελεῖ. It means *to declare it, to reveal it*, and there is in this word the idea of dealing with details. In other words, it is not something incomplete, but thorough. The future would convey the idea also that the revealing would not all come at once, but that it is something that is done increasingly so as to make the understanding stronger and stronger.

Apparently among all of the problems that the church of Corinth had, was that they were overlooking the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. **(Read 1 Corinthians 2.)**

The point in all of this is that what God has revealed in His Word must also be revealed to us by the Spirit. No person will ever believe the truth about Jesus Christ “and Him crucified” except by the direct ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Lord is in heaven. We did not see Him in His flesh while He was here on earth. So we are totally dependent upon the revealed Word of God. And it is the work of the Holy Spirit not only to teach those whom God intends to save, but to convict and to convince that Jesus is really the Son of God Who came to earth as a Man to offer Himself for our sins to secure our salvation.

But what did the Lord mean when He said that the Holy Spirit “shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you”? And the Lord said practically the same thing in verse 15.

16:15 This is an amazing verse. Putting verses 14 and 15 together we see that the Holy Spirit receives the things of Christ, and then in this verse our Lord said that all that the Father has, He has. I doubt if there is any clearer statement in the Bible of the Deity of the Holy Spirit and the Deity of God and the Deity of Christ. The things of Christ are all things that pertain to His Deity, and all that had to do with His mission on earth for the salvation of sinners. There is total oneness of Deity and will between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Ryle quoted Dean Alford, another great expositor of the Word who said this about verse 14, but it applies just as much to verse 15:

This verse is decisive against all additions and pretended revelations, subsequent to and beside Christ; it being the work of the Spirit to testify to the things of Christ, and not to anything new or beyond Him (quoted by Ryle, II, 388).

We come away from this part of John 16 with what should be two very strong truths about the Bible. One is the absolute authority and trustworthiness of Scripture. The other is that the emphasis throughout the Scriptures is upon Christ. Speaking one day to a group of Jews, the Lord told them this: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they that testify of Me.” How could they claim to have eternal life when they hated the Lord Jesus as they did. It could only be because of the blindness, the spiritual blindness of their own hearts. It is only by the Scriptures that people will be convinced by the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ is God, and that salvation can only be received from Him. Cf. John 1:11-13.

March 3, 2008

We now come to the last part of this Upper Room Discourse, the message which the Lord gave to His apostles on the very eve of His arrest, which in turn led to His death the very next day. I have chosen to call it:

II. QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME WITH THE LORD (John 16:16-33).

Several times during the ministry of the Lord upon the earth He had spoken of His death and His resurrection. But the disciples did not understand what He was saying. In fact, they didn't like what He was saying. They had the Messianic hope in their hearts that the Lord had come, and would establish His kingdom on the earth, and they believed that this time had come.

But even in this Upper Room Discourse the Lord had spoke of going away. Notice John 14:3, 18-19, 28; 16:5-6. Now in 16:16 our Lord brought up that subject again.

16:16 In this verse, and even in those before where His leaving is mentioned, the Lord did not mention His death. He was focusing attention on His departure from them and when they would see Him and when they would not see Him. Obviously what the Lord had been telling them about the ministry of the Holy Spirit was to be a source of comfort to them, especially when He spoke of the Holy Spirit revealing to them after He was gone things that the Lord still wanted to tell them. The Holy Spirit was coming to glorify Christ (16:14). And two times, once at the end of verse 14 and then again at the end of verse 15 the Lord had told them that the Holy Spirit would "show" them the things of Christ. What they were going to learn about Christ was only in its beginning.

Bishop Ryle, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, cites several different ways in which the words of our Lord in this sixteenth verse have been explained. Some expand the Lord's words to the second coming. But it seems to be that the Lord was referring to the events immediately before Him, and His return to the Father having finished His work in His first coming.

The Words here in verse 16 seem to point to the immediate future:

1) "A little while, and ye shall not see Me."

The Lord knew that they were going in a very short time, "a little while," to the Garden of Gethsemane. There He would be arrested, taken away and tried, and then the next day be condemned and crucified. This would lead to His burial. On the third day He would rise from the dead. This led to His second statement:

2) "And again, a little while, and ye shall see Me."

And the reason that this would also be "a little while" because, as He said,

3) "I go to My Father."

His mission in coming to the earth would be completed, and accepted by the Father. But after He went back to the Father He said that He would send the Holy Spirit.

It is interesting to think of all that was involved in the Lord going, then coming, and then going again, and that the Lord could speak of it all with a great degree of composure. From the standpoint of His humanity it must have been hard for Him not to have the full support of the apostles.

But instead of going to the Lord with their questions, they talked about what He had said "among themselves."

16:17 In our reading in the Gospel of Mark for yesterday I was struck by the comment which Mark made in connection with what the Lord had been telling His disciples, and what te response of His apostles was at that time. Let me read to you what I am referring to. It is found in Mark 9:31-32:

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

I don't know if anyone knows for sure why the apostles "were afraid to ask him" unless it was because what the

Lord had just told them about His mission was so completely different from what they expected it to be, that they were hesitant to ask Him any questions lest the Lord produce further proof that He was going to die. But it is tragic that often when we come to things in the Word that we do not understand, instead of seeking any answer from the Lord, we discuss it among ourselves, and so don't get to an understanding of what may trouble us in the Word. It may be that they felt like we so often feel about asking questions. We don't want to ask what might be called *a dumb question*, or that we might be asking about something that we really ought to know.

From their response which is recorded in this verse it is apparent that there wasn't anything about our Lord's statement in verse 16 that they understood.

16:18 From what the apostles were saying in this verse, it is clear that the part of our Lord's words in verse 16 that was especially troubling to them, were the words, "a little while." They could mean a few hours, or a few days, or, on the other hand, a few weeks, or at least a comparatively short time. But this is the problem that we often face in interpreting Bible prophecy. In some ways this is similar to the question that the Ethiopian eunuch had for Philip as he was reading Isaiah 53. The eunuch said, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" (Acts 8:34).

16:19 This is a very interesting verse in connection with the fact that the Lord Jesus Who was the Son of God Who had become a Man. In the verses we have been learning in Philippians 2 about our Lord's incarnation, we are told that He "made Himself of no reputation." Those words can be translated, "emptied Himself," or that He "laid aside" His divine attributes. So that some liberal commentators have said that this means that when our Lord became a Man, He ceased to be the Son of God. But that is not true. If it were He would have become a mere human being, but not God the Son. In no way did the Lord cease to be the Son of God, but He voluntarily did not exercise some of His attributes, and yet in verses like this we see evidence of His Deity. He knew that the apostles wanted to ask Him a question, and He knew the very part of what He had said which was troubling to them. When He needed to, He could exercise His omniscience, which is what He did in this case.

King David said in Psalm 139:4, "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, Thou knowest it altogether." So what we have in John 16:19 is an expression of our Lord's Deity. And the Lord graciously answered their question in John 16:20.

16:20 The Lord introduced His response with the words, "Verily, verily." This is the Greek word which can be transliterated into English as our word, *amen*. This word doubled is used twenty-five times in John's Gospel. Thayer says in his Lexicon that this gives it a superlative force, in which case we would translate it, *most assuredly*. Used by our Lord it emphasizes the absolute truthfulness of what He was about to say. And the truthfulness of the Lord's response was further guaranteed by the words, "I say unto you." But He explained what He had said by the effect that it would have upon them, and He contrasted it with the effect that it would have upon the world.

Obviously He was speaking about the effect that His death and burial (when they would not see Him) would have upon them, in contrast with the effect that it would have upon the world, the people in the world who wanted to do away with Him forever.

The disciples would weep and lament. They would wail and weep loudly, and continue to mourn. Their hearts would be broken. Their hopes would be dashed. Their faith would be tried to the very limit. The death of their Lord would cause them the greatest sorrow. Their grief would be uncontrollable. They would refuse to be comforted. And to these two words the Lord added the word *sorrowful*, which means deeply grieved. The

wailing might get under control, but not the sorrow.

But on the other hand, the world would rejoice. His enemies were glad to get rid of Him, and they thought that His death would put an end to Him so that for the future they would never have to have anything to do with Him again.

But, speaking of the disciples again, the Lord said that “your sorrow would be turned into joy.” And what does this refer to but the resurrection of the Lord, a resurrection of victory over death, to a life that would never again experience death. “Death hath no more dominion over Him.”

But to add to the knowledge of the joy that they would have, the Lord gave His disciples an illustration which we have in the next verse.

16:21 This is where I ought to sit down and let one of you mothers explain verse 21. I have observed the pain of a mother giving birth to a child, but I have never experienced it. Some day I am going to count the passages of Scripture when speaking of pain liken it to a mother in labor, giving birth to a child. My mother-in-law used to say that if the husband had every other child, there never would be more than three children in any family. I am sure that she was right.

But just as we fathers have never experienced the pain that our wives experience in child birth, so I think I have to say that we have never experienced the joy that a mother experiences when that child is born. The Lord said, “For joy that a man is born into the world.” But the Lord used a generic term here which can mean either a boy or a girl. A couple may want a boy, but get a girl. Or they may want a girl, but get a boy. But I have never met any parents who wanted to send back what they got. And the joy that a mother has when that baby is born safely and healthy, is the joy that the apostles and other believers experience, when they heard the words, “He is risen!” Not only did sorrow turn to joy, but hope was revived, and faith was strengthened as never before in their lives.

16:22 The Lord understood their sorrow. At that moment their sorrow was not what it would be in a few hours. They were sorrowful because the Lord had simply said that He was going away and that they would not see Him. But their sorrow would be increased a hundredfold when they realized that His going away meant the Cross, and the torture and suffering that that would mean. I wonder how many of the Lord’s disciples remembered that the Lord said, as He did here, “but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”

A. T. Robertson said, “In verses 16 and 19 Jesus had said, ‘Ye shall see Me,’ but here we have one more blessed promise, ‘I shall see you.’” When the disciples saw the Lord, their sorrow vanished, and joy filled their hearts. When the Lord saw them, as the prophet Isaiah said, “He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11).

If such was our Lord’s joy, and if such was the disciples’ joy, when they saw Him raised from the dead and alive, what will be His joy and what will be our joy, when our Lord comes in the air to take us to that prepared place where sin and sorrow and pain and death, will all be things of the past. “And so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

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16:23 What is “that day” to which the Lord refers here in verse 23? It must be the day when He sees them again, the time after His death and resurrection. Because “that day” (not a twenty-four hour period, but

the time when the Lord would be with them after His resurrection) would shortly be followed by the ascension of the Lord, “ye shall ask Me nothing.” All of the time that the Lord had been with them during His earthly ministry, they had had the privilege of bringing their questions, and even their needs, to the Lord Jesus personally. But after His ascension they would bring their questions and their needs directly to the Father,

Contrast this verse with John 14:12-14. This probably one of the reasons that it was “expedient” for them that He go away. See 16:7. During the Lord’s earthly ministry they had brought their questions and needs directly to Him. From that time on, especially when the Lord would no longer be with them, they would ask directly and personally of the Father. For them it would mean a great step ahead in their prayer lives. In OT times the relationship that the people had with God was mainly with the priests. But following the death and resurrection of Christ their privilege of approaching God in prayer would be greatly increased. We know from the OT that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, along with Moses and Joshua, and then with men like Samuel, David, and Solomon and the prophets of the OT, there was a strong personal relationship with God which was often greater than many of us have today, yet by the work of Christ all believers now are priests, “an holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5), by which we all can approach God personally. So the work of Christ at Calvary meant a strong personal relationship with God for all of the Lord’s people.

Charles Erdman, in his characteristic way of being able to tie the loose ends of Scripture together, made this very helpful comment concerning chapters 14, 15, and 16. This is what he had to say:

This closing paragraph is in peculiar harmony with the continual purpose of John. As the fourteenth chapter presents testimony to the divine Person of Christ, as the fifteenth emphasizes the need of a vital faith by which believers can abide in Him, so this chapter enlarges upon the life which results from faith, a life in which the Lord by the power of His indwelling Spirit, makes real His gracious presence, gives increasing knowledge of the truth and confidence in prayer, inspires heroic courage, and secures abiding peace (Erdman, *Op. Cit.*, p. 142).

So there is no doubt but that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the Cross, opened the way for all believers to have a more intimate relationship with all the members of the Godhead. One place where this is clearly stated in the epistles of the NT is Ephesians 2:18,

For through Him [Christ] we both [saved Jews and Gentiles] have access by one Spirit unto the Father. This new fellowship with the Father was made possible by the death of Christ when the veil in the temple was torn apart, from top to bottom, making the way into the Father open now to all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

16:24 There is a new power in prayer for believers today. The Lord did not mean that the apostles had not prayed before, but they had not gone to the Father in the Name of the Lord Jesus. But following our Lord’s death He would say, “Ask,” *i.e.*, the Father now in My Name, “and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” How sad it is that we do not take a greater advantage of the more intimate relationship that we have now with the Father through Christ. This is where fulness of joy is to be found.

Now from verse 25 on to the end of chapter 16 we have our Lord’s conclusion to the ministry that He had had with them from chapter 13 up to this point in chapter 16. Assuming that we have read verses 25 through 33, Bishop Ryle made this statement:

The passage we have now read is a very remarkable portion of Scripture, for two reasons. On the one hand it forms a suitable conclusion to our Lord’s long parting address to His disciples. It was meet and right that such a solemn sermon should have a solemn ending. On the other hand, it contains the most general and unanimous profession of belief that we ever find the Apostles making (II, 390).

And then he quoted verse 30 here in John 16. (Read.)

16:25 At this point the Lord said, “These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs.” What did He mean by this?

The Lord did not use here the common word for a parable which is **παραβολή**. We have many illustrations of parables in the Gospels, stories which have a special relationship to some spiritual truth. Here in John 16:25, and again in verse 29 the Lord used the Greek word, **παροιμία**. Lenski says that we have no word in English which is a good translation of a **παροιμία**. The closest to it would be the word *parable*. But in a **παροιμία** there is no allegory, no story. What the Lord said in John 16:16 is a **παροιμία**. He said, “A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to My Father.” And this is probably why so many interpretations have been given to the Lord’s words. Was He speaking of a temporary time between His death and His resurrection, or was He talking about His ascension and His second coming. But when the Lord said what He did in verses 27 and 28, then the disciples said to Him, “Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no parable (**παροιμία**). However, although the disciples understood, or said that they did, the meaning is not completely clear to us. But I have told you what I believe it means – that the Lord was going away in death, but that He would come back to them for a brief time after His resurrection.

But here in verse 25 the Lord confessed that He had spoken to them in *ἐν παροιμίαις*. The Lord often spoke in language that had a deeper meaning than appeared on the surface, but one reason was to provoke the interest of those to whom He was speaking so that they would ask Him what He meant. He purposely used parables to conceal the truth from those whom He did not want them to understand.

So the Lord spoke in a **παροιμία** because He expected to let them know later what He meant. But He definitely wanted them to ask Him about what He was saying. See John 16:5.

16:26 “At that day” is still the day mentioned by our Lord in verse 23. The time between the Lord’s resurrection and His ascension would be a time when the purposes of God would be made clearer to the disciples. But it would be because they would ask the Father in His Name so that it would not be necessary for them to ask in His, the Lord’s Name. The normal pattern of prayer is that we address the Father in the Name of the Son and by the Spirit of God. Stephen prayed to the Lord Jesus as he was dying. See Acts 7:59. And I am sure that there are times when we would pray to the Holy Spirit, such as when we are studying the Word. But the normal way is to address our prayers to God the Father.

16:27 The Lord used the verb **φιλεῖ** here because “He wishes to express the intimate love of a father to His children . . . The Father is so attached to the disciples that His affection constantly goes out to them, . . . ready to supply their every need” (Lenski, p. 1104). And the present tense in **φιλεῖ** means that this is the Father’s continuing attitude toward the disciples who have loved the Father’s Son, and continue to love Him. “Have loved” and “have believed,” the perfect tense in the Greek (as they are in the English) speaks of something that began in the past and continues right up to the present. So this would indicate that the eleven disciples were men who truly loved the Lord.

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But the wonderful truth in this verse indicates that the same statement of our Lord applies to all of the Lord’s people who have loved the Lord, and continue to love Him, and to all who have believed that the Lord Jesus came from the Father, and who continue to believe that He came out from God. So we can see how important it is to the Father that we love His Son, and believe that His mission in the world proceeded from God.

There is an important Biblical principle that our Lord was stating here, and we see it as we go on into verse 28.

I am thing of what the Apostle Paul wrote about the Gospel in Rom 1:16-17:

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

When the Lord was speaking to His disciples on this occasion, and said what He did in verse 26, if they loved the Lord, and if they believed that He had come from God, they believed the Gospel, didn't they? You wouldn't love Him and believe that He had come from God if you did not believe the Gospel. But notice that Paul went on to say, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith . . ." Have you ever wondered what "from faith to faith" means? It is by faith that we believe the basics of the Gospel, or it is by faith that we believe anything in the Word. But when the Lord opens our eyes to any truth in Scripture, we believe what He is showing us, but we expect him to teach us more, and we expect that whatever more He teaches us, we will believe just like we have believed what ever it is about that particular truth that He has already told us and which we have believe. "From faith to faith" means from one degree of faith to another degree of faith. As we believe what the Lord has taught us up to this point, we can expect that He is going to lead us to higher levels of truth. The world says that seeing is believing, but God says that believing is seeing. By this we mean that we make progress, sometimes very slowly, but we make progress in our knowledge of God and of His Word, by small degrees. Now let us see how this is illustrated in verse 28.

16:28 In the first part of this verse the Lord repeated what He had said that they already believed, that "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." That is as far as they had gone in their understanding of the Lord's mission on earth." They were with the Lord in their understanding of this truth thus far. But what did the Lord now add? "Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" This is what they had not understood.

But look at their reaction in the next verse.

16:29 "His disciples said unto Him, 'Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.'" They did not respond to this statement by arguing with the Lord. They believed what He was saying. Right here we have a marvelous illustration of the Gospel being revealed to the apostles "from faith to faith." They already had believed that the Lord had come from the Father. At this point their eyes were opened to see not only that he was going back to the Father, but that He had to go back to the Father. The Gospel would have been incomplete apart from the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus. It may not have been clear to them at this point that He would go back to heaven by way of the Cross, the tomb, and His triumphant resurrection, but step by step the Lord was leading them from faith to faith.

It is true that we believe what we have heard, and that leads to more light. We go "from faith to faith," from believing what we are told in the Word, and that leads to a greater understanding of the truth. It is something like walking up a stairway. The only way you can get to the top step is by taking one step at a time. The only way we can grow in our understanding of the truth is to believe what the Lord shows us now, and that leads us to take another step in our understanding of the Bible. The person who reads the Bible with a skeptical attitude, will not learn what he needs to know. What did the writer of the book of Hebrews have to say about faith?

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6).

There are two essentials for the profitable study of the Word that come out of these two verses. The first is that we love the Lord. The second is we accept by faith what the Lord shows us. And on that foundation we go, by God's grace, from faith to faith to faith to faith, and so on. "The just shall live by faith." We can't please God

except by faith. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). But in all of this let us not forget that the first key to profiting from the Word, is a fervent, excited, emotional love for the Lord, based upon Who He is, and what He has done for us. I once heard a man say about sports, if you get excited about your football team, or your basketball team, you are a fan; if you get excited about the Lord, people look upon you as a fan-atic. Emotion can run away with us if we are not careful, but it would be good to see more fervency among believers in their love for the Lord. After all, aren’t we supposed to love the Lord with all of our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind. And when we love the Lord like that, it makes us better neighbors, and friends, and parents, and child. Always keep a close check on your love for the Lord, and also keep check on your faith in the Lord. The Lord loves us fervently when we love His Son fervently, and He wants us to love Him also with a fervent love.

It was at this point that the disciples understood that the Lord was going back to the Father before His mission to the earth could be fulfilled. Do you remember those times when the Lord was speaking to you “plainly”? He always means what He says, but it sometimes, and perhaps, most times, it takes time for us to get what the Lord is seeking to tell us from His Word. This was such a time for the apostles. They said, “Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no parable.” And here we have that word for which we have no equivalent in English, **παροιμίαν**. This is what some people are always looking for as they study the Bible, some hidden, special meaning. And this can lead to the most ridiculous interpretations. Instead of taking literally what the Lord had said about His going away, and then His coming again to them, and so on, they tried to put some strange, hidden meaning on his words. The Greek word for *parable* does not appear at all in this chapter, or in the Gospel of John. It is always **παροιμίαν** that John used, and refers to what the Lord had said about His going away, etc. But He told them it was a **παροιμίαν**, that He meant for them to put a literal interpretation on what He has said to them.

The disciples continued in verse 30.

16:30 Here we get to see further evidence that follows from loving the Lord and believing His Word. They took a great step ahead in their faith as it related to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This had all convinced the apostles that “Thou knowest all things.” This is omniscience. There isn’t anything that the Lord doesn’t know. The disciples were learners, but God never is. And so if the Lord knows all things, why should He be questioned by anything that He says? It has been shown over and over again in Scripture, that the Lord has been right in everything that He has said in the past. With a record like that there is no reason for questioning any prediction that He makes concerning the future. We may not understand all that He says, but we should never question anything that He says.

This is an amazing passage of Scripture where right before our eyes we read of the apostles’ growth in their knowledge of the Word of the Lord, and their growth also in their knowledge of the Lord Himself. So this becomes a most important passage to us. We need to know how much God loves us because we love His Son, and because we believe what He says, even the amazing claim that He came from God, even in a greater sense that it could be said about John the Baptist that “there was a man sent from God, whose name was John” (John 1:6). I repeat what I have said many times before, everything that we know about the Godhead, and that we know about the Bible, has been taught to us by God, the Holy Spirit – all of it.

But now that the state of their hearts was what it was, the Lord asked them a question which we read in verse 31.

16:31 Jesus responded to them with a question: “Do ye now believe?” He was asking them if they were in a believing frame of mind? This is what always should be true of us. We are not to read our Bibles to see

if we can find out if it is true, but we read it because it is true. In the next chapter of John we are going to see that the Lord prayed for the apostles (and us), “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17). This is a good question for us to ask ourselves daily, “Do you now believe?” This needs to be our attitude all of the time.

What did He want to tell them? Read verse 32.

16:32 And remember that the apostle had said that the Lord was no longer speaking to them in proverbs. But He was going to tell them something about themselves that they would find very impossible for them to believe. They loved the Lord, but how much did they love Him? The Lord is quite evidently speaking here of His approaching death. Do you remember how all of this Upper Room Discourse actually begin back in John 13:1? Let me read to you what we learned in that verse:

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end (John 13:1).

I have told you many times that God’s love for us never varies. The same is true of our Lord Jesus Christ. He, too, is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). The same is true of the Holy Spirit. They might be grieved with us at times, probably many times, but there is never any change in Their love for us. They loved us in eternity past. They have loved us all through our lives. And they will love us forever!

We feel like our love is the same. In this chapter we can assume that the love of the apostles for the Lord Jesus Christ was at a very high level! Spiritually things could hardly have been better in their hearts. But then the Lord made an amazing declaration. “Behold, the hour cometh.” He did not mean a period of sixty minutes. But He meant, in this case, an event was coming, would most certainly come, in which they would again find their faith to be tested. In fact, He said, “yea, is now come.” When what would happen? And here He turned His attention upon them, not on Himself: “When ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and ye shall leave Me alone.” We know that at other times they violently denied what the Lord said along this line. Peter, in particular, had rejected the Lord’s Word to himself as being untrue. The feelings that were in the apostles’ hearts at this moment, are not revealed. But we know that even the thought that they would leave the Lord was incredible to them. What could possibly come up that would cause them to leave the Lord, and to leave Him alone since they loved Him as much as they did.

The Lord, of course, had in mind His own arrest, trial, and His crucifixion. None of us knows how weak we can be when the circumstances turn against us. Why would they all be scattered? Why would Peter deny more than once that he even knew the Lord? For just one reason: they feared for their own lives! In some ways these apostles were strong men, but the Lord spoke of a situation when all of them would leave Him. This would be the severest test of faith that they had ever, or probably would ever, experience. They feared for their lives, although at that time they would not have know what the Lord was referring to. But then He said this: “And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” Now the Lord couldn’t see the Father at this moment, but He was resting on the promise of the Father. Paul tells us that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). The Lord was thinking of Himself at this moment. We need to remember that the Lord was a Man as well as God. And that many of His reactions would have been like ours. He was “tested in all points like we are.” He was touched with all the feelings of our infirmity. The Cross was not an easy experience for Him to go through. He sweated great drops of blood as He anticipate His death on the Cross. But the Father (with all of the love and tenderness suggested by that expression) was with Him. The Father was all our Lord had.

But now look at verse 33 where the Lord again was thinking of His apostles.

16:33 “These things” would refer to all that the Lord had spoken to them in chapters 13 through 16. They would have “peace” in Him, and thus through the Word that the Lord had spoken to them. The writer of Psalm 119 said in verse 165, “Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them.” Cf. John 14:27, and note its connection with John 14:1 ff. *Peace has been described as the condition of our hearts when nothing disturbs our relationship with God* (Lenski, p. 1016). Cf. Isa. 26:3, 4, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace . . .” It does not mean freedom from trials and troubles. It does not mean necessarily good health. It certainly does not mean financial security. Peace give us courage to look to the end of things in the plan and purpose of God, and to know that God “works all things together for good . . .” We don’t find peace in our circumstances, or in our possessions, or in our power of influence, or in people (although the Lord’s encouragement can be a great help when we are in trouble, but true and abiding peace is to found only in Christ.

The Lord did not paint a glowing picture of the lives and ministries of His people, but He promised them “tribulation.” Everybody has tribulation in and from the world, but the Lord overcomes the world in many ways, but one is that He uses the trials and testings that come to us in the world to serve His purpose in bringing through our trials in the world greater spiritual growth and greater fellowship with our Lord.