

**Find Life in the Son:  
You're Going to Be Okay.  
John 16:1-15**

**Introduction**

The upper room discourse of Jesus displays for us His tender care for those who believe in Him. What He taught His disciples recorded in John 13-17 is a precious treasure to all who have come to believe in the witness the apostles bore about Jesus Christ. We find the truth there applicable not just to first-century Christians but to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We need the light it gives. We need the encouragement. Because the world is still hostile to Jesus, and our mission to evangelize that world remains in effect.

When times get hard, many lose heart and become fretful. It is good for us to remember just how difficult the situation was for the disciples the night Jesus gave these instructions. If His guidance was sufficient for them in the time of crisis they were facing, then it is certainly sufficient for us, whatever difficulties we come upon. That's why I've called our study this morning, "You're going to be okay."

<sup>1</sup> "I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. <sup>2</sup> They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is

offering service to God. <sup>3</sup> And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. <sup>4</sup> But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. <sup>5</sup> But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' <sup>6</sup> But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. <sup>12</sup> "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> All that the Father has is mine;

therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

1. Unhindered by Persecution: Forewarning (1-4a)
2. Advantaged in the World: Holy Spirit Conviction (4b-11)
3. Guided in the Truth: Spirit-Inspired Certainty (12-15)

### **1. Unhindered by Persecution: Forewarning (1-4a)**

<sup>1</sup> "I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. <sup>2</sup> They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. <sup>3</sup> And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. <sup>4</sup> But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

The instruction Jesus is giving His followers lets them know to expect persecution. It should not blindsides them. It should not cause them to stumble, to be scandalized so badly that they fall and even fall away from following the Lord. How often an unexpected crisis shakes people so badly that their faith falters! It is not uncommon to hear of those who've turned away from Christianity because they encountered some traumatic sorrow or

unexpected abuse. Jesus wants His followers to be prepared.

We live in an area of the world where following Jesus does not cost as much as it does in many other places.

John Piper: "There is a great gulf between the Christianity that wrestles with whether to worship at the cost of imprisonment and death, and the Christianity that wrestles with whether the kids should play soccer on Sunday morning."

Christians were hounded from the beginning. Jesus predicts that His followers will be kicked out of the synagogues—excommunicated from the community of faith, cut off from their families, their culture, their worship. In other words, the first wave of persecution would come from religious people who professed to believe the Scriptures.

Saul who became Paul was among the persecutors. He and those he represented thought they were serving God by killing Christians. He ravaged the church like a wild animal, sending Christian refugees out of Jerusalem by the thousands (Acts 8). But God used their scattering to plant gospel seed wherever they went.

The first three centuries were marked by heavy persecution against Christians, but it started with the very people you would expect to be most open to the gospel of the Messiah—the Jews. They would brutalize Christians for the same reason that the pagan persecutors did: they did not know God.

*People who actually know God don't treat other people wickedly. Evil is, evil does. Beware religious groups or institutions that do evil in the name of God.* Such groups have filled histories' pages with the blood of the martyrs. But the blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the church. You cannot stamp out the gospel simply by killing those who believe it.

Ancient Christian tradition records that all the apostles except John were martyred for the faith—crucified, beheaded, stabbed, dragged to death, stoned.

But such persecution is not just a first-century phenomenon. You see it throughout history. In the subsequent centuries believers were tortured, fed to wild animals, and burned. Even after Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine in A.D. 325, in time the Roman Catholic church joined in the persecution. From the birth of the papacy in the 600s on into the 1800s, Rome executed countless

believers they deemed heretics. During the English Reformation John Huss, Hugh Latimer, William Tyndale, were among the many who gave their lives out of devotion to Christ and the Holy Scriptures.

The killing of Christians has continued to this day. *Historians estimate that the number of Christian martyrs in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was in the tens of millions.* Communism, Hinduism, and Islam murdered many millions simply for their faith in Jesus. According to a 1997 article in the *New York Times*, more Christians were martyred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century than in all the previous nineteen centuries.

Jesus predicted it would be this way. He forewarned us so we would not be shaken. Peter passes the same counsel on to those he writes in 1 Peter 4:12-14

<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

## **Applications**

- What are some reasons we Americans tend to be surprised or perplexed by encountering persecution at any level?
- Why is remaining faithful to Christ worth whatever suffering it may bring?
- In what ways can it help you to know that Jesus forewarned us to expect such mistreatment?

## **2. Advantaged in the World: Holy Spirit Conviction (4b-11)**

"I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. <sup>5</sup> But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' <sup>6</sup> But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

Jesus' leaving them filled His disciples with such sorrow and fear that learning why He was leaving and where He was going mattered little to them at this point. That they were losing Him was gut-wrenching.

All along the way Jesus has been well aware of what they can handle. His full understanding of them has not changed. The Spirit will enlighten them further when they can bear it.

But He does want them to trust Him that His going away is to their advantage. He is going to make atonement for their sins so that they can be reconciled to God. He is going to rise from the dead, breaking its power over believers. He is going to send the Holy Spirit to regenerate them, to enlighten them, to indwell them, to guide them, to empower them, and more. Later, Paul the apostle will explain that if we walk in the Spirit, that is, live our daily life yielding to Him, we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. The Spirit will produce holiness in us. His life in us will produce fruit in our lives.

*But the Spirit will not only be at work in believers. He will be at work in the world. If you think about it, He has to be. How else could those who are of the world end up coming to repentance and faith in Christ?*

The world is hostile to Christ and His disciples, but their Lord will send them into the world to make disciples of all ethnicities. How can they possibly succeed? Especially given the opposition that has come against Jesus Himself during His three and a half years of public ministry.

Jesus tells us in this passage how it will happen:

John 16:8-11



**8** And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: **9** concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; **10** concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; **11** concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

First, the Spirit of God would convince and convict many who initially did not believe in Jesus just how wrong they were to reject Him. On the day of Pentecost there were those who participated in His crucifixion who would be overcome with Holy Spirit conviction and end up repenting and trusting in Christ (Acts 2). We are well familiar with the fact that 3,000 souls turned to Christ that day. What we sometimes forget is that this mighty turn happened in Jerusalem, where only 50 days earlier Jesus had been crucified by popular demand!

Second, the Spirit would also convince the world of righteousness—that is, the perfect righteousness of Jesus, our substitute—the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world by bearing in His own body on the cross the wrath of God against sinners.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The resurrection of Jesus and His subsequent ascension into heaven to the Father would affirm that He was, in fact, absolutely righteous. Death could not hold Him.

Acts 2:24

God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

God would not allow His Holy One to see corruption in the grave, just as Psalm 16:10 foretold.

His visit to earth would be over, and He would be at the right hand of God the Father, there to intercede for His people.

Third, the Spirit would convict the world of judgment, because Satan, the ruler of this world, would be judged. Paul calls him the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who energizes those whose nature is to disobey God (Ephesians 2). But at the cross Jesus would break his tyrannical power over humanity. If an angelic spirit as powerful as Satan himself could be judged and dethroned, then it is clear that God will not let evil go on unchecked. Judgment day is coming.

The NT Scriptures often refer to Christ's defeat of Satan and the blessing that brings us.

Colossians 2:15

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Hebrews 2:14-15

<sup>14</sup> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

1 John 3:8

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 4:4

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Colossians 1:13

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

### **Applications**

- How is it helpful to know that Jesus is well aware of His disciples' struggles, sorrows, and limitations of perspective?
- How can it boost your own courage to know that the departure of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit gives us great advantage in the world?
- How does knowing that the Holy Spirit is at work convicting those in the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment encourage your own sharing the gospel?

### **3. Guided in the Truth: Spirit-Inspired Certainty (12-15)**

<sup>12</sup> "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

At this point of their training the disciples were overwhelmed with all that was happening. They did not understand how it all fit together, but with the Holy Spirit's help, one day they would. The Spirit of truth would guide them into all truth. That's how the apostles could preach about Jesus with complete accuracy. That's how they could eventually author the books of the New Testament with no error whatsoever. Not only would they recall exactly what Jesus said and did, but they would understand the significance of it all. And more, the Spirit would reveal to them what was yet to come. The writers of the NT prophecy the future. John himself became the author of the book of Revelation.

*Like the Old Testament, but with even greater clarity, the Spirit-inspired New Testament glorifies Jesus. He shines brightly in its pages. Any Christianity that does not make much of Jesus is not the Christianity the Holy Spirit promotes.*

What the Spirit revealed to the apostles was from God the Father Himself. There is perfect unity between the Spirit's guidance, the perfect truth of the Scriptures, the glorifying of Jesus Christ, and revelation from the Father. Those who teach otherwise are confused at best and liars at worst.

The Spirit would empower the apostles to write the NT Scriptures and would illuminate the minds and hearts of those who would come to believe in the gospel the apostles recorded there.

1 John 2:20, 27

**20** But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

**27** But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

We today have access to the “all truth” of the NT because of the promise of Jesus here. And the Holy Spirit convinces us that the gospel to which they have testified is absolutely reliable truth from God Himself.

### **Applications**

- In what ways do you make it a priority to give regular attention to the “all truth” of the New Testament that the Spirit led the apostles to preach and write?
- What are some ways people sometimes try to claim Holy Spirit guidance contrary to the Holy Spirit’s inspiration of the NT Scriptures?

- When have you heard people talk about revelation from God that either demotes Jesus or contradicts the written Word of God?

## **Conclusion**

God the Father, Son, and Spirit have given us all we need for life and godliness. Even in a hostile world that persecutes Christians, we are going to be okay.

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the coming of the Holy Spirit gives us great advantage in the world?

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