

## “Jesus Left for our Good”

*John 14:16-31*

Jesus and His 11 disciples (minus Judas who has left to arrange for Jesus' betrayal), are engaged in serious conversation around the U-shaped Passover table. Jesus has made numerous statements that have startled His closest friends and followers. 'One of you will betray me' was the first. And He said this after He washed everyone's feet.

Then He said 'I'm leaving you and you can't come where I'm going now'- referring to His death. Peter reacts strongly and insists he will not let that happen and he will die for Jesus. Jesus again says something hard; Peter, you will deny me 3 times before morning.

He assures them He's going to the Father to prepare a place for them in His Father's house and He will come back for them. This time Thomas reacts, 'Lord, we don't know the way to where you're going?' Jesus responds, 'Sure you do Thomas. I am the way, the truth and the life. That's how you get to the Father; through Me.'

Now it's Philip who reacts, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.' Jesus, trying not to hide His disappointment says, 'You've seen the Father; He and I are the same'. Sensing Philip and the others would want to go with Him to be with God right then and there, Jesus reminds them they have a job to do and they'll do even greater things than He did because He's going to the Father. While there, Jesus says, you can ask me in prayer whatever you need and I'll answer you.

This is why it's important Jesus leaves; it's for the good of the disciples. He'll even say that exact thing in Ch. 16:7

*But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*

It never feels good at the time when someone you deeply care about moves away, or goes to a different school or job, or goes home to glory. Yet, if we're honest, had those people not left, there are things we would not have experienced or people we wouldn't have met or things we may not have learned or done. Perhaps we were too reliant on them and we needed a break from them so we could learn and grow and trust God not our friend or family member.

Jesus wasn't going away because He didn't want the disciples to rely on Him. Just the opposite. If He didn't go away they wouldn't learn to rely on Him through the Holy Spirit. Jesus makes it quite clear through Ch.'s 14-16 that if He doesn't go then the Spirit can't come. And Jesus said the Spirit will not only be with you but "in you". The Spirit dwells within us when we accept Jesus as Saviour. So what do we have and what are we capable of doing through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

<sup>15</sup> *"If you love me, you will obey what I command. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

Jesus tells us quite plainly that though the Holy Spirit we have ...

## **The Assurance of God's Indwelling Presence** **(14:16-18)**

Remember Israel's golden calf incident during the wilderness wanderings? God initially told Moses that because of the people's sin that His presence would now not go with him and the people. Instead God would send an angel instead (Ex. 33:2). But Moses was upset by this and he pleaded with God in Ex. 33:15

*"If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. <sup>16</sup> How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*

Moses says the presence of God being with His people distinguishes God's people from those who don't know God.

*<sup>17</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."*

This has always been God's desire; to dwell with His people. When Jesus came John wrote in John 1:14,

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

This is why the disciples are upset. Jesus says He's leaving. How can we continue? What will distinguish us now from everybody else? People knew who they were because Jesus was with them. So Jesus reassures them that He is not leaving them as orphans; without a Teacher, a parent figure; without protection.

*<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—*

There are two Greek words for 'another'. One means another with differences but its still the same kind. Like you have two shirts, or two mugs or two children. They are still shirts, mugs or children but the shirts are different colours, the mugs are different sizes and the children are different ages and characteristics. But there's also the word "another" that means exactly the same as. And this is the word Jesus uses. I'm going away – the presence of God, His glory travelling with you – but I will send another – God's indwelling presence. What will He do for us?

### **Who 'supports' us whenever we need help (v. 16)**

Almost every translation has a different word here. The 1984 NIV has Counsellor; the revised NIV has Advocate. The KJV has Comforter, the NKJV has helper. The Amplified Bible (which has running commentary throughout) has Helper and then in brackets

(Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengthened, Standby),

The Greek word is Paraclete and it may have been better to leave it at that because the word means all these things. Advocate refers to the Spirit's role in representing us to God, defending us. Comforter refers to His presence that assures us God is always here for us. Counsellor refers to His

teaching rule and convicting role as He brings God's Word to our minds. Helper means He aids us in whatever we need. So the Spirit is God's presence assisting us wherever we are and whenever we need help in whatever circumstance. And like the ongoing presence of God

**He never abandons us (vv.17-18)**

Orphans were defenceless. They had no one to speak for them, to meet their needs, to comfort them. Like Moses before with God, the disciples were afraid that without Jesus they were on their own. 'No way' Jesus says; He will be with You and in you providing you with all you need in better ways than I can. And He will be with us forever reminding us of what God said many times in the Old Testament to His people 'I will never leave you nor forsake you; I am with You always.' And you can trust His leading because He's the Spirit of truth. He will never mislead you if you learn how to listen to Him because the Spirit's job is to communicate only that which comes from Jesus and the Father. In 16: Jesus will say

*<sup>13</sup> But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. <sup>15</sup> All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."*

And Jesus also tells them something they will like to hear. Through the Spirit we have ...

**The Promise of Seeing Jesus  
(14:19-21)**

This was why the disciples were troubled. Jesus was going away. When will we see you again? Jesus said in v.19

*<sup>19</sup> Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."*

What does mean "On that day"? Usually in that day or on that day refers to the future return of Jesus. However, I think Jesus is referring to His post resurrection appearances and His ongoing ministry through the Spirit. The disciples will definitely see the resurrected Jesus. But if the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, then the people of God will 'see' Jesus' presence and activity through the changed lives of those who will become born-again of the Spirit.

**Which unbelievers can't see (vv.19-20)**

The unsaved don't recognize the presence and power of Jesus working through the Holy Spirit. They look at you and me and see 'religious freaks'. They don't see Jesus. But you and I recognize the presence and power of Jesus in each other, in the evidence of God's hand in local and world circumstances and in the creation and atmosphere. But we have the Spirit who enables us to be sensitive to Jesus' power and presence.

And if this is what the disciples were worried about and didn't understand yet that Jesus wanted them to continue His work without Him, but now through His presence and power in the Spirit,

## ***This motivates us to obey God by servicing others (vv.21-24)***

When believers realize God is at work all around us through the Spirit (v.20) we will be emboldened to obey God's commands out of love for God. The more we obey God, the more open we are to see the evidence of God all around us. And we'll see Jesus through God's people as we obey His Word by the power and leading of His Spirit. Notice Jesus keeps weaving in His teaching to one another. To serve one another. How do we know Jesus' Spirit dwells in us? We'll see it through our servant attitudes.

What else do we get through the indwelling ministry of the Spirit?

## **Jesus' Teaching (14:25-26)**

What would the disciples surely miss when Jesus went to His father? His teaching. Jesus assures them the Spirit will continue to take Jesus' spoken words and speak them into and through our minds, helping us to speak them ourselves to each other and the world around us.

<sup>22</sup> Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup> "All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Jesus' words come directly from the Father. Now the Spirit's job is to remind us of what Jesus and the Father say. The Spirit takes the words of God's Word that we hear and read and reminds us of them. He needs for us to read and hear God's Word because He can't remind us of something that hasn't been in our mind in the first place. That's what re-mind means. A lack of obedience to God's Word comes from either a refusal to obey God's Word or a lack of knowing what God says.

Why were the disciples troubled at Jesus' leaving? Because they didn't have a proper understanding yet of all that would happen, and about the Spirit's coming and about the resurrection and the post resurrection appearances and about Pentecost, etc. But once we come to Acts 2 and the Spirit comes on them, we see changed men. Confident in sharing Jesus with others even willing to suffer. And instead of running from suffering, they endure it knowing God is with them. Why then do we get 'troubled' by the sufferings in life? Because we either haven't listened well enough to what Jesus says in His Word about these things. Or we've heard it but we refuse to apply it to ourselves. Or we're applying well-intentioned but misleading teaching about these things that hasn't come from Jesus or the Spirit but people who have taken His words and said something different about them.

That's why we have to grow in the Word of God, so we can discern the Holy Spirit's teaching from error.

When the disciples understood the role of the Holy Spirit in their life, as they experienced His helping ministry in the post-Pentecost part of Acts what else did they receive?

## **Inner Peace of Our Ongoing Relationship with Jesus (14:27-31; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Phil. 4:6-7)**

<sup>27</sup> *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

<sup>28</sup> *“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. <sup>30</sup> I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, <sup>31</sup> but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.*

*“Come now; let us leave.*

The peace that the world offered in Jesus’ day was the peace of Rome. Which was an absence of war through fear of punishment. Jesus means ‘shalom’ the peace of God. Shalom means peace with God who meets your needs in all circumstances. So we won’t be troubled or afraid even in life’s most difficult circumstances. Why? Because God is with you through His Spirit. Who advocates to God on your behalf when the accuser mentions you and me to God. He’s our teacher who reminds us of God’s Word when we need it. He’s our helper who assists us we obey God’s Word to serve others even when we’d rather not. He comforts us in difficult times. He counsels us when we need to hear a gentle rebuke from God’s Word.

This is the peace that God provides. Listen to these other familiar passages about God’s peace:

<sup>3</sup> *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. [2 Cor. 1:3-4]*

<sup>4</sup> *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [Phil. 4:4-7]*

The peace of God in Christ Jesus is available to us through the Spirit as we serve others in obedience to God and remind ourselves of His promises from His Word in even the most difficult circumstances. Jesus told His disciples this before the crucifixion because the prince of the world (Satan) had already put his plan of killing Jesus in place. What Satan thought was a victory was his ultimate defeat. If Satan has no hold/power over Jesus, neither does he have any hold over Jesus’ followers. Even in attacks we can know God’s inner peace through the presence of His Spirit. And this is also how the world learns that we love the Father and do what He commands us to do. The hard things. Like loving one another through humble service and loving the lost around us enough to tell them about Jesus knowing that they may not appreciate the gospel the way we do.

And that may result in their salvation which the Spirit fills us with His joy in that news or it may result in our being disappointed or even hurt but the Spirit is right there to comfort us and meet whatever need we have at that time.

Jesus assured His disciples that even though we don’t see Him physically it doesn’t mean He’s not here spiritually and making an impact right around us and through us and in us. We have to walk in step with the Spirit and constantly have ears open to hear what He’s saying to us.

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