

Upper Room – Part 10

The Holy Spirit within the World

John 16:1-15

This chapter is the closing remarks of the Upper Room Discourse. Christ is almost finished with His last teaching to His precious disciples. Jesus' love and concern for their future is so evident!

I. Completion of the thought on Persecution

“These things (the topic of persecution) have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended (Gk – Fall into a trap/stumble). They shall (spoken as fact – because it was!) put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service (Priestly service – God ordained). And these things will they do unto you (again, spoken as fact!), because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you .” John 16:1-4

“I have spoken unto you,” – In my study I saw this cliché over and over, “To be forewarned is to be forearmed.” This was brought home to me as I was flying to visit my sister and to hold a Bible conference at her church. I had just read through this text and was considering it when the Captain of the plane interrupted my thoughts. He told us to make sure our seat belts were fastened for just ahead was turbulence. Sure enough within minutes our smooth ride became bumpy. But having been “forewarned I felt forearmed in both preparation physically and mentally”. Christ desired to warn them and prepare them for the persecution ahead. It was not given to discourage or cause fear but to prepare for the dark and gloomy days ahead. They would remember Jesus' words and it would be a comfort to know Jesus had prepared them for this time. We see Jesus continue to show His disciples love to the end.

We have studied in pass lessons that Jesus had said His followers would be persecuted, even as early as the Sermon on the Mount. Many are familiar with the Matthew 5 account of the Sermon on the Mount, but let's look at the book of Luke and see how this persecution is described in that setting. (Luke 6:22-36)

“think that he doeth God service” – These “conscientious persecutors” full of religious zeal felt as they were protecting their religious system from heretics spreading heresies. This is how they viewed the crucifixion of Jesus, the stoning of Stephen, and the chasing down of the early believers. (John 5:16; 19:7; Matt. 26:65) This was the attitude as Paul testified concerning his life before coming to Christ. (Acts 22:3-5; 26:9-11; Gal. 1:13-16; Phil. 3:6) Being thrown out of the synagogue/Temple would cause that person and their precious family to lose every privilege as a citizen of Israel. This would include social, economics, education – other words, reduced to poverty. Often they would be beaten long before being cast out of the synagogue, trying to get that person to recant. All eleven of the apostles were eventually put to death except for John.

“not known the Father, nor me.” – Again Jesus repeats why this persecution would exist. (John 15:21) Their antagonism was in opposition to God! These zealous, religious, protective of their positions and system, persecutors were wretchedly ignorant of Him. (Acts 3:17; Rev. 6:9) Paul called himself the “chief of sinners” in I Tim. 1:12-17.

“I was with you” – Jesus did not need to give the disciples this information before now because He was with them and protected them as He protected Himself when the hour was not yet come. BUT NOW Christ is going away! This fact is the difference maker!

II. The Reiteration of the Necessity of Christ’s Leaving

“But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient (advantageous) for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” John 16:5-7

“none of you asketh me,” – But had not they asked, both Peter and Thomas seemed to ask Him that very thing! or did they? In John 13:36 and 14:5 the disciples had been faced with Jesus leaving and they did ask where he was going. But Jesus **knew their hearts** and if we examine the text carefully we get hints of their real objective to asking. Peter was aware of the enemies and danger and not really grasping or maybe even caring about the place Jesus was going, was just willing to go, proving his own fearlessness. Thomas was confused on the way, He didn’t seem to desire the destination of Christ. We see this in Jesus’ answer to Thomas; He answered the true question of Thomas. After Jesus answered the two disciples none asked anything more about where Jesus was going. In reality He was going voluntarily and completely under his own accord to His Father. (John 7:33; 13:33; 14:28; 17:11)

“sorrow hath filled your heart.” – “sorrow” – Gk “grief” Even though Jesus had said twice, “Let not your hearts be troubled”, these men were overwhelmed with sorrow and fear. This is the atmosphere of the room! The disciples were stunned and afraid because **He revealed that He was going away!** Their hopes for a kingdom and their preconceived ideas were being dashed. In this passage we get to see the very affectionate heart of concern Jesus had for His disciples. He would tell them again the reason He needed to leave even though this brought great sorrow to them. It was actually going to be advantageous to them and eventually bring them great joy! The foundational principal he desired to give them was the necessity of Him going away!

“for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you;” – The Holy Spirit’s coming was based on Him going away! It was absolutely necessary; the Holy Spirit would only come after Jesus left! **Their good was hinged on His leaving them!** Then the Holy Spirit would: Indwell them – John 14:16-17; Teach them – John 14:26; Empower for witnessing – John 15:26 Twice Christ had sent out the disciples without Him to preach the gospel but now He sends them to bear witness of Him with the indwelling Holy Spirit! The theologian Pentecost says, “The Spirit could accompany them and be with them and empower them in the discharge of their ministry.” (Pentecost pg. 445) The Holy Spirit was coming “unto you” for He needed a body to work in this world and you have that body! You become the temple and tool of the Holy Spirit! (I Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; Rom. 8:9) Warren Wiersbe said concerning this, “He wants to use us to glorify Christ and to witness to a lost world.” (WW pg. 289)

It was advantageous for Him to go in spite of the impending crisis. The disciple’s greater works would actually be helped by His going away. The Holy Spirit’s coming would render them effective! Their sorrow would be outweighed by the gain of the Holy Spirit and soon His leaving meant that He would be present in the whole world.

“And so it is better that we will have Christ represented by the Holy Spirit literally living within us, than have a physical Christ on earth we can only see occasionally.” JR Rice p. 314

III. More Explanation on the Holy Spirit's Work

“And when he is come (approx. 40 days away!), he will reprove (Gk – legal term - pronounce the verdict/convict – point the finger and grove guilty) the world of sin , and of righteousness , and of judgment : Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father (because He completed His work here – Rom 4:25), and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged (lit. “has been judged” John 12:31 He has been judged and the sentence will be carried out when Christ returns!).” John 16:8-11

This convicting work is done through the Word of God and the lives of believers being salt and light. As we live “godly in this present world” they “behold our good works”. The Holy Spirit is the prosecuting attorney; we are the witnesses; the unbelievers are the guilty prisoners (Rom. 6:23). But God’s desire for them is not judgment in hell but His gift is eternal life through the precious blood of His Son.

“of sin” – This is singular in the Greek – one sin in mind! UNBELIEF! This is what damns people to hell. John 8:24 Men are sinful but it their lack of faith in Christ that sends one to hell. This is the world’s greatest need!

“of righteousness,” – “self-righteousness” is shattered, (hypocrisy) John 3:19-21; 7:7; 15:22, 24 Christ was constantly battling the religious leaders concerning their self-righteousness, with Him gone the Holy Spirit will continue this work. This is the heart of God, He hates self-righteousness, it is like filthy rags, and He desires to robe us in true righteousness (Phil. 3:8-9)! Jesus had revealed the emptiness of religion done on our own.

“of judgment,” – The Holy Spirit desires to bring people to a place of decision, He is the only One who can open the heart! The world is under Satan’s control, it cannot make judgments – but Christ does (John 8:16).

“As we witness in this hostile world, the Spirit uses the Word He has taught us, and we share Jesus Christ with the lost. It is our job to witness: it is the Spirit’s job to convict. Perhaps some of us need to quit acting like prosecuting attorneys or judges so that the Spirit can use us as faithful witnesses.” Warren Wiersbe pg. 290

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear (hear, understand, handle) them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth (the writing of the Gospels and Epistles): for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (the Book of Revelation).” John 16:12-13

As the disciples were able to bear the instructions and revelations of Jesus He would reveal it. More truths will come under the Holy Spirit. This is such a comforting verse when you study the Bible.

“he shall not speak of himself;” – The Holy Spirit will not work independently, but under the authority of God. He will deliver those things given to Him.

The Holy Spirit and the Written Word of God: The Holy Spirit has not another message, interest or subject to teach. He only guides in the truth of Christ. I have said in the past, “The favorite subject of the Holy Spirit is Christ”, I think I might change that by saying instead, “The only subject of the Holy Spirit is Christ!”

“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” John 16:14-15

“He shall glorify me:” – All truth points to and glorifies Christ! He was the theme of the Old Testament and continues in the New. The Holy Spirit and Christ will always be in agreement. He will never lead someone to do anything contrary to the example or teaching of Christ. He is the Spirit of Truth and that truth is the Word, Jesus Christ.

“All things that the Father hath are mine:” – Jesus is equal with God, they share all things and the Holy Spirit reveals those things to us. Eph. 3:4-5; Rom. 16:25-26; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21

Believers Application:

You and the Holy Spirit, how is it going?

Read the Bible. I Cor. 2:9-3:4

Paul teaches the Corinthians about the how “God hath revealed them (*God’s future blessings for us*) unto us by his Spirit:” He goes on to teach how we can only understand God’s Word by the teaching of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Chapter 3 begins Paul’s scolding of the Corinthians because of their inability to digest the meat of God’s Word. They had evidently grieved or stifled the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and he called them “carnal” and “babes”. Without looking ahead, I began to quickly surmise that Paul was going to point out wicked, immoral, idol worshipping, and the drunkenness that the Corinthians were taking part. I have read this passage many, many times, ---and then I saw “there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?” Their carnality was based on their poor relationships with one another. No love, no forgiveness, no tolerance, no submitting to one another. And they were so carnal that their understanding of the Word of God was hampered! Oh My! How about us!? Can we only understand the basics of the Word of God because of the grief we’ve given to the Holy Spirit? Ephesians 4:30-32 supports this thought by saying, “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Search your heart, seek forgiveness and start chewing on meat from the hand of the Holy Spirit!