

Bibles???

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Will you please turn your bibles with me to the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the Gospel of John

And we currently find ourselves in the portion of scripture that is known as the Upper Room discourse.

This six hour period where we find Jesus pouring into His disciples / teaching them / comforting them – mere moments before He is arrested, beaten, betrayed and nailed to a Roman cross.

Jesus knows that their greatest pain and their greatest difficulty is just around the corner – and He is taking these final moments to prepare them for what is up ahead.

By the grace of God, we are actually going to finish up chapter 16 – which means that Jesus will finish up His farewell discourse to His disciples.

Starting next week, we are going to begin ch 17 – where we see the true Lord's prayer, as He prays for Himself, His disciples and all believers – and He will do this right until the come and arrest Him.

So, in our text this morning – the final lesson that Jesus is going to make three wonderful promises to His disciples about what to expect on the other side of the cross.

The time of sorrow will be for a little while – but on the other side of the cross,

Jesus is going to promise them that they will experience a deeper understanding of God, they will have direct access to God and they will also find true peace from God.

**Let's pray...**

- We ask that You will reveal Yourself to us in a fresh way

**Read Text**

As Jesus has been pouring Himself into His disciples –

We find the disciples, for the most part, have not said much throughout the entire evening.

Back in verse 5 – Jesus called out His disciples and pretty much said “Hey guys – you hoo - I’m telling you guys I am leaving you – I’m going back to heaven – and none of you have asked me questions about where I am going? Or how am I feeling”

In fact – we have to go back two chapters where we find any mention of the disciples saying something to Jesus or asking Him anything.

John provides us with insight of what they were all thinking –

We know that they have talked among themselves –

"What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?"

What is Jesus telling us when He says, a little while???

The disciples are confused

They are concerned

They don't understand what is happening

They don't fully understand what is up ahead

They are troubled in heart

They are sorrowful

And it would be safe to say that here at the end of ch 16 – the disciples find themselves in a mess – emotionally and mentally

But I love reading this portion of scripture and seeing that Jesus enters into their situation to minister to them and serve them exactly where they are at.

Loved ones, this is such an important principle for us to grasp – not only about the character of God but the nature of God as well.

He meets us where we are at

And He receives us as we are

We don't need to go through an entire series of getting our lives in order first and trying to fix this or trying to fix that.

Jesus calls us to Himself – as we are

And He loves us as we are

In the midst of the mess that we might be in or in the midst of the difficulty that we find ourselves in – He loves us and He cares for us

And as we come to Him and lay our lives down before Him,

He loves us enough to begin to work in us and through us

And one of the things that He promises every single one of His disciples is that our pain has a purpose.

Our times of sorrow – have a purpose

And we saw this last week, He promises to transform our pain and sorrow to joy

God is going to use the very thing that brings us pain /

The very thing that brings us sorrow –

God is going to use it and transform to bring us joy

Not only will God transform our sorrow to joy – but in the process He will transform us

And change us

And our relationship with God who loves us

He will use these times to develop our spiritual maturity / to make us better

But there is an important caveat – if we allow Him to

If we allow Him to – He will transform the sorrow to joy

However, if we don't allow Him to – instead of becoming better, we become bitter

We begin to have resentment toward God, toward our family members, toward our friends, our church family etc.

Now, this ties in to what Jesus is teaching His disciples – because remember, as we put ourselves in their sandals – the disciples in a few hours, they are going to scatter, not one of them is going to stand up for Jesus –

They are going to go through a tremendous period of sorrow –

They have a choice to make – they can quit – go back to Galilee and become bitter about everything – blame Rome, blame each other, the crowd that chanted “crucify Him”

Or they can allow God to transform their period of sorrow into joy

And in the process, they themselves were being transformed to do the work that God called them to do – to continue the ministry that Jesus began – to proclaim the Good News

**[Jhn 16:25-33 NKJV] 25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.**

Let's pause right here

Here we have the first promise that Jesus makes to His disciples

If we look at the totality of everything that Jesus has been teaching up to this point – not only to His disciples but to everyone He had encounter with up to this point, we will notice that Jesus has been using figures of speech

He has been speaking to everyone using parables, proverbs and illustrations to teach them.

Just last week, we saw Jesus use the illustration of childbirth to communicate to His disciples what would happen after the death and resurrection of Jesus

The joy of a mother holding her son/daughter for the first time outweigh the pain that she experienced through childbirth

So Jesus is using this illustration to communicate that point.

Jesus washing His disciple's feet earlier that evening – another example (it was a physical illustration) that Jesus used to make a point. (pointing to the cross and how the disciples were to serve one another)

So, on this side of the cross everything He spoke was in figure of speech but on the other side of the cross – He was going to speak plainly to them.

Turn your bibles to Luke 24

Now, here in Luke 24 – it is on the other side of the cross

**[Luk 24:44-46 NKJV] 44 Then He said to them, "These [are] the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and [the] Prophets and [the] Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,**

On this side of the cross – the disciples understanding was hazy at best –

They believed that Jesus was the Messiah but they didn't understand the reason for the suffering and the reason that Jesus had to go to the cross –

But on the other side of the cross – Jesus is going to tell them plainly.

What was once a mystery will be made clear to them by Jesus

Not only that, but when Jesus departs from the and returns to the Father, the Helper, the Holy Spirit – He will bring even more clarity and understanding to what Jesus has been teaching.

So, on the other side of the cross – comes a deeper understanding of God.

Through the agony of the cross, comes a deeper understanding of God

And this biblical truth should bring comfort to us today, church – because we sit on this side of the cross

We should take comfort in that the All Knowing, the All Powerful, the Incomprehensible God of the universe wants us to rightly understand Him

He wants us to rightly understand that magnitude of His love for us that has been displayed through Jesus Christ

He is not a God of confusion

He wants there to be clarity when it comes to His plan of redemption

Now, here is where the application comes for us.

If the disciples were able to find deeper understanding of God on the other side of the agony of the cross (their time of sorrow) – then we too can find a deeper understanding of God on the other side of our pain, on the other side of our own suffering

Remember, I mentioned it last week – sorrow is the tool that God uses to bring us to spiritual maturity

This is the Gospel

Jesus, Himself – God in flesh, suffered for you and me so that we might have life.

By His wounds, we are healed

**26 "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;**

I had you make a note of the phrase – in that day

Again, Jesus is pointing to the other side of the cross.

Moments earlier, Jesus had made the promise to His disciples that whatever they ask the Father in My name He will give them.

Again, it wasn't a blank check that they could ask for whatever they wanted and as long as they added, in Jesus name to the prayer then God was obligated to ask for it.

It was asking for something that Jesus, Himself, would ask for

It means humbly coming directly to the Father in Jesus' merit and not our own.

So what Jesus is telling His disciples here is – on the other side of the cross, because of the work I am going to do on the cross – you will have direct access to the Father.

Now, the thing to remember is that in Judaism – access to the Father before the cross was extremely limited.

It was limited to one man, at one time, once a year

And it was the High Priest that went in on behalf of the Jews who went before the mercy seat with the blood of the sacrifice.

And through that sacrifice, God would cover the sin of the nation – not take it away.

So, if we were living in the OT under the Old Covenant, if we wanted access to the Father we would have to do it through system that God developed: the priest, the temple and the blood of the sacrifices.

That was man's access to God

That was the type of relationship that those in the Old Testament had

Jesus is saying that it is different through Him – through the New Covenant

Jesus' death on the cross tore the veil that separated us and God

We have direct access to God

As a pastor – I have no greater access to God than any other believer in this room.

**[Heb 4:16 NKJV] 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

So when each of you are praying at night – coming boldly to the throne of grace

Guess what? I am there with you – coming boldly to the throne of grace.

We are doing it together.

Something else that Jesus is saying that when the disciples learn to ask in Jesus'

name, He doesn't want them asking Jesus to pass on messages to the Father

Jesus didn't want them to see Him as merely some kind of new priest Who would insert another layer between them and God.

They needed to know that He was removing the layers so that they could have direct access to God.

They needed to know that Jesus is that access!

To know Him is to know & experience God.

And they can go directly to Him – because...

**27 "for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.**

There are many people who woke up this morning doubting the love of God in their life

There are those that are question the love of God in their life

They are wondering if they are even lovable enough for the love of God

The bible says the Father Himself loves you

You are loved

By the way – the word that Jesus uses here is not agape love, it is phyleo love

It is the same word that was used by the Jews to describe how Jesus felt about Lazarus, when they saw Him weeping at Lazarus' grave.

That is the love that the Father has for us

It is an affectionate love,

He is fond of us

He doesn't simply tolerate us

That means that He doesn't get mad at us or find it an inconvenience when we come to Him with our prayers –

He desires to hear from us.

You see, it is the love of God that breaks down barriers

Paul says in Romans 2:4

That it is, the goodness of God, that leads to repentance

And as a believer, we have direct access to Him

**28 "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."**

By the way, based on my count - this is the 7<sup>th</sup> time that same evening, that Jesus has repeated to the disciples that He was leaving them and returning back to the Father

Do you think He's trying to make a point?

**29 His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! 30 "Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God."**

I love that these portions of scripture are recorded for us.

Again, we know that the disciples are totally confused

But here at the end of the chapter – they respond with “Oh! Now we get it! You really are the Messiah. We’ve got not more questions or concerns.”

Do I think they were being sincere – of course I do

I truly believe that they really wanted to understand and grasp everything that Jesus was telling them.

Did they really get it? Of course not – we will see proof that they didn’t get it based upon how they react to Jesus being arrested

But again, we have to appreciate their desire –

Jesus meets them where they are at and they are trying to meet Jesus where He is at

“Oh know we get it – “

Jesus had said to them that He was going to speak plainly to them – but that was on the other side of the cross.

I believe that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit coming upon them – because the ministry of the Holy Spirit is teach them all things and illuminate the scriptures.

There was coming a time where there was going to be no more pictures – everything was going to be spoken plainly to them.

They don't understand but, they are trying.

Much like the same way that we live our lives

There are times in our life where when we think we got it – and we realize that we really don't –

And we pray – help me get it

And more often than not – we don't even know what “it” is

Yes, the disciples know that Jesus came from God – they get it, but they truly don't get it.

They will truly get it on the other side of the cross.

**31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 "Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.**

By the way – this is a kind way of saying – “you are going to abandon me in my deepest and darkest day of need.”

You are going to leave me alone – but they literally were going to abandon Him

And Jesus reveals to them – that it is ok because He is not going to be alone.

This is something we all need to hold on to.

For there will come times in all our lives when we feel alone, as if no one loves or cares for us.

Our friends might desert us and not a single soul is left by our side.

In that hour of darkness, when loneliness threatens to overwhelm us, remember this –

God is there.

He has made you a promise to never leave nor forsake you.

**[Psa 27:10 NKJV] 10 When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.**

**33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation;** (can I get an Amen)

**but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

Because of our association to Jesus Christ – we will have tribulation. That is a given

I want you to turn to the person next to you and tell them “you will have tribulation”

Now, I want to make sure that we read this last verse in context

Remember, the disciples have declared that they get it

And Jesus has responded with – you guys don’t get it – yet

In fact, you will literally fail the test as you abandon Me

But then notice that Jesus tells them – after declaring to them that they are going to fail – that in Me you will have peace

How does exposing your greatest failures bring them peace

Jesus’ wording is the key

**These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace**

Jesus is telling the disciples of the cross and of their failures so that they will realize that their only hope for peace is found outside of themselves

You see, true peace is not dependent upon our efforts, it is solely found in Jesus

It is when our own failures meet the cross – that is when we truly find true peace

And it is only because we have been justified by Jesus that we can truly have peace with God

Think about what Jesus is saying here in the last verse

You will have peace and you will have tribulations/trials

This means -

True peace is not found in an absence of trials –

Jesus doesn't remove trials from His disciples – He extends peace to them even in the midst of their trials

And the same thing goes for our lives –

Our lives may be marked by trials and tribulations and Jesus offers us peace and victory through His death and resurrection.

It is the other side of the cross where we find a deeper understanding of God, where we have direct access to a loving Father who is there to care for us and it is also where we have true peace which is only found in Jesus

And I pray that we may be a church that is rooted in His peace and that we may have peace in all circumstances.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**[Eph 3:14-19 NKJV] 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what [is] the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

This is a prayer from Paul – and his prayer is directed to us – the believer - that we might be able to get it

That we may be able to comprehend with all the saints what [is] the width and length and depth and height-

And because we have access to God, He reveal to us what that “it” is

**[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '**

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

