

## **Bibles???**

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

Turn your bibles with me to the John 16

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the Gospel of John – and, we are beginning a new chapter this morning.

Just a quick reminder, we still find ourselves in the middle of the Upper Room discourse –

we are just a few hours before Jesus was to be arrested and taken, tried and put to death –

this was His farewell address to His disciples.

and we find Jesus comforting and reassuring His disciples

and He is doing this by giving them many promises

He promised -

- He was going away to prepare a place for them and that He would come back to take them to that place.
- They would do greater works than He had done because He was going back to His Father.

- They could ask the Father anything in His name for the work of the Kingdom and He would make sure they received it.
- That they would be given resurrection life and power to do the work He was commissioning them to do in His name.
- They would be given divine knowledge to understand all He had taught them while He was with them.

He gave them these fantastic promises to comfort and encourage their hearts in His absence—but then – as we have seen in our studies the past two Sundays - He begins to promise them some things that were not so blessed.

He promised them that the world was going to hate them

He promised them that the world was going to set itself against them because of their association to Him

He told them that to be “one of His disciples” – was to be the target of the world’s hostility.

But He also promised that despite the persecution – the Holy Spirit will still be working – working to give a witness about Jesus and working through the disciples to give a witness about Jesus

In our text this morning – Jesus is going to continue to prepare His disciples and us – by giving us a warning - making sure we know all the consequences of being a follower of Him.

Let's pray...

**Read our text –**

We all have our personal testimony –

We all remember what it was like to live life apart from Jesus

It was a life full of emptiness, depression, loneliness, for some of us – substance abuse, a life of wandering through life without a sense of purpose and direction –

And then – by grace through faith in Jesus – a miracle took place

We become a new creation and our life is radically and forever changed

The result of that miracle – is the desire to want to share Jesus with others

Now, when we go share that good news (the gospel) with our family and friends, with our coworkers and neighbors – we naturally think that they are going to be as excited about Jesus as we are.

And as we have all come to know – we know that it is usually the opposite that is true.

Jesus wants us to know up front that that will often not be the case—that this will not be the common response we're going to get from the people of this fallen world and that we're setting ourselves up for persecution!

That's exactly what Jesus wanted His disciples to know and be prepared to face

**[Jhn 16:1-6 NKJV] 1 "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.**

The phrase, these things –

This is in reference to the promise that Jesus made to His disciples and us, back in ch 15:18 -

These warnings about how the world would hate us because of our association to Jesus.

And the reason that He is warning them is so they don't stumble –

The Greek word translated 'stumble' is a word we get our English word 'scandalized' from.

It's a word that means: "to cause someone to experience anger and/or shock because of what has been said or done."

Jesus is trying to prepare the guys ahead for reality.

He's giving them a good dose of reality, so when (not if !!!) the hard times come, they are not surprised.

I think one of the mistakes that we as believer make when we share the good news – is that sometimes we make the mistake where we try to paint a little too rosy picture of Christianity

We tell people that if they come to Jesus that their sins will be forgiven.

Absolutely True.

We tell them that they will gain eternal life.

Absolutely True.

But then we tell them that all their problems will go away

Not true

Church -

Jesus never promises to remove all our problems, but He does promise to be with us through them, and help us with them.

Jesus was always 'up front' with His disciples—

He didn't paint a rosy picture to His followers -

He always presented 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth' to those who were thinking of following Him—so that they could 'count the cost' first – so that they would be prepared for the persecution and hatred that was to come.

I was reading this book the other day – from a pastor

And in his book, he had an entire chapter on stressing the importance of premarital counseling.

And one of the reasons that he said it was important is because he said that there is a need to dispel all the false impressions that a couple has about marriage.

And he said, "I feel that it's part of my responsibility as a pastor to almost paint as bleak a picture of marriage as possible, so the couple goes into marriage with their eyes opened, rather than being disappointed when things don't quite end up like they expected."

Just as it's important for a couple to realize what they're getting into in a marriage, it's important for a person to have a realistic understanding of what it's like to follow the Lord.

Turn your bibles with me to Ezekiel 13

**[Eze 13:9-12 NKJV] 9 "My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of**

Israel. Then you shall know that I [am] the Lord GOD. 10 "Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when [there is] no peace--and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered [mortar]-- 11 "say to those who plaster [it] with untempered [mortar], that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear [it] down. 12 "Surely, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, 'Where [is] the mortar with which you plastered [it]?' "

The false prophets were giving people a false reassurance that everything was going to be okay, when it wasn't.

They were shouting out peace when there was no peace –

They were like men who build a brick wall, but instead of using cement to hold the bricks together, they used scotch tape.

And they were going to be in deep troubles when the walls fell down

Church – we preach a real gospel here at Calvary Santa Cruz

Don't candy coat it

It's better that they know the truth up front, then become disillusioned later, fall away, and say, "I tried that, and it didn't work ..."

The hard truths: The Christian life is filled with difficult times.

**The Christian is not immune from illness, poverty, or trouble.**

Look at the life of Job

The “name it and claim it” teachers will say that the problem with Job is that he simply didn’t have enough faith.

Yet God in describing Job, God said,

**Job 1:8b - that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”**

So what ends up happening is that people experienced disillusionment and quit.

"I tried that, and it didn't work ..."

**2 "They will put you out of the **synagogues**; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God **service**.**

The word synagogues means “the gathering”

It was the Jews coming to the place of “the gathering” to listen to the scribes and rabbis read the scriptures.

Jesus is telling His disciples – that because of their association to Him – they are going to be excommunicated from the “the gathering”



Now, it is hard for us to grasp what it means to be put out of the synagogues – because, we might say – “Big deal – how are they going to throw you out of the church, why don’t they simply go to the one down the street or to the one in the nearest suburb?”

The Jews would be prevented from doing any business with these individuals

That means that your fellowship, your family life and your livelihood was affected.

And the problem was that excommunication was a complete shunning –

You no longer existed –

BTW - this is a practice that is done in many cults even to this day.

You are a Mormon living in Salt Lake City – you want to leave the LDS church and become a Christian – it is going to cost you.

It is going to cost you your job, it is going to cost you your family, it is going to cost you your spouse.

In fact, this you can google this if you want – a few years ago, they got rid of the term excommunicated and came up with a new nicer term – they refer to those individuals as “disfellowshipped” – which essentially is the same thing.

Here is a new flash church –

No church has the power or the authority to excommunicate anyone from heaven.

**[Jhn 6:37 NKJV] 37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.**

So the warning church –

Being a Christian may make you "uncool" to some people.

The gathering that we hung out with before – they may decide that we're no longer cool.

So we have to ask ourselves – are we ready for that???

**Do we count the cost -**

Who do we want to please more, our friends who are ready to drop us in a moment's notice, or God, who will never leave you?

Who do we really want to please, our friends who really don't know what they want in life, or Jesus, who knew so much about our problems, that He died to pay for your sins?

Jesus is speaking prophetically here – in the short term – He is addressing the remaining eleven disciples –

That after the day of Pentecost – less than a month and a half from the time Jesus tells them these words –

The religious rulers / the Sanhedrin will demonstrate a hate for these Jewish traitors – that they are going to hunt down and try to exterminate not only these eleven disciples – but every single Jew who belonged to “the way”

And in the process – these religious rulers are going to believe that they are doing it all to offer God service – (I had you make a note of that word service)

The word service that is used here is the word that is used to describe how the Levitical priests would offer sacrifices and incense in their worship to God.

So in the persecution of Christians – they believed that they were worshipping God.

Saul of Tarsus – when you read His letter to the church in Philippi,

He considered the persecution he produced to be an example of his zeal for God.

Stephen, was a fulfillment of this prophesy – as we see in Acts 7 – where he is stoned by those who felt that they were doing service to God.

And as we study church history – we find that almost all of the disciples were put to death for their association to Jesus.

**3 "And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.**

We talked about this before, back in John 15:21 -

The point is that when people do these things to you, it's only proof of the fact that they don't know God.

**4 "But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.**

Over the past few weeks – I have pointed out up this point – that the two main jobs of the Holy Spirit is to teach us and also to testify of Jesus

Here is another job of the Holy Spirit and that is to bring everything to remembrance -

But here is the issue – the Holy Spirit brings thing to remembrance – but we have to take it in.

As we get older, we learn more and more – the problem is that we forget most of it.

But if we, like we are doing today, if we invest our time being in His Word and meditating in His Word – if we take it in

It is the Holy Spirit's job to bring it back

He brings it to our remembrance

All those who are over 40 say Amen!!!!

We take it in and He brings it back

This is just reading your bible or listening it on your bible app

You can do this in your car

You can do this in the office

And the Holy Spirit will bring it back

When Jesus departs and the disciples are being persecuted, beaten and jailed by the religious rulers – the Holy Spirit will be the One who reminds them of the words that Jesus spoke –

Now, if we read the second half of verse 4 – Jesus is telling them, all this persecution stuff and hating stuff – I didn't tell you about it three years ago.

“And the reason I didn't tell you about it three years ago – was not because I was being sneaky or trying to deceive you

It was because I was with you.”

You see, Jesus did mention some of the hardships that were involved in being His follower -

**[Mat 10:17 NKJV] 17 "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.**

The thing is, He didn't place the same kind of emphasis as He just has, now that He's getting ready to leave.

Remember, while He was with the disciples, He protected and comforted them.

All the anger of the religious rulers was all aimed at Him.

But after He leaves, it will now focus on the disciples.

**5 "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'**

I want to make sure we grasp what is going on here in verse 5 –

I want to make sure that we read it in context –

This upper room discourse began with the celebration of the Passover Meal

In the four to five hours that have transpired that evening,

- Jesus has announced that someone is going to betray Him
- He has washed their feet
- He has announced that He is going to be leaving them
- He is pouring into them
- He is serving them
- He is preparing them
- He has told them that they are going to face persecution

And when you look at the questions that the disciples are asking that evening– which by the way – we have to go all the way back to ch 14

All the questions revolve around them

Why can't we follow You?

We don't know where you are going?

How do we get there?

What about us?

Nobody is asking Jesus a question about how Jesus is doing.

Nobody is saying, "Jesus – You know our hearts are troubled – what about Your heart?"

How are you feeling?

Look at the question again - none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'

Church -

I don't think it is a technical question – like location (remember, Jesus had already told them that He was going to go prepare a place for them)

I believe it is a probing question about the heart of the matter.

You see – this entire time – their focus was on self!!!!

And from the beginning of the UR discourse – Jesus has been telling over and over again – get your minds off of self – stop looking at the temporal and look to the eternal.

Is this something that happens within the church today? – Absolutely

Especially during times of trouble – just like the disciples were about to face.

We become self-centered

What about me? Don't you care about me? And of course the answer to that is yes – we care.

But there comes a time, where - the power of the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, where we would get outside of ourselves and start caring for other people.

Where instead of what about me – we come with the mindset of what about you?

How can I serve you?

Imagine the impact on our communities if the church had that mindset???

What would it be like if we truly caught the vision of Jesus Christ – and lived sacrificially.

If we lived in a way, where we thought of others more highly than ourselves.

We are only here for about 4-5 hours a week.

Real ministry is done outside these four walls –

**6 “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.**

Why did sorrow fill the disciple's hearts?



1. Because they were asking the wrong questions
2. Because all they were concerned about was Jesus' departure.

But if they'd been paying closer attention they would have heard Him say where He was going; He was returning to the Father.

Because of that, they would gain something that would MORE THAN compensate for His leaving – the Holy Spirit!

And you have to come back next Sunday for that study.

Amen

Let's pray...

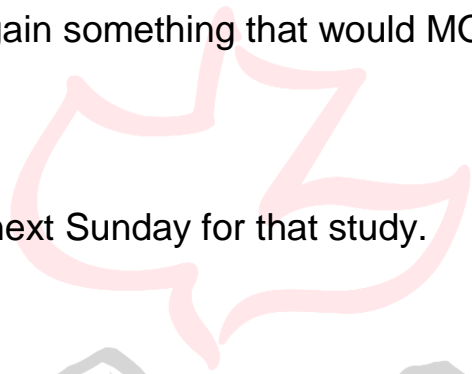
To Receive Christ do the following:

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.



CALVARY  
Santa Cruz

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.

Since we are starting the Book of Hebrews this Wednesday night – I was looking at the text – looking for wisdom and guidance – and I came across this verse.

**[Heb 11:8 NKJV] 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.**

Church – that is the life of the believer

We know we are going to go to heaven – but what God is going to do in our lives between now and then – we don't know.

He is going to use us – the way He wants to use us

and take us to where He wants to take us –

And in everything He calls us to do – we walk by faith

[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.'

