

## PEACE I LEAVE

John 14:16-29

In the hours immediately before His arrest, trial and crucifixion Jesus was trying to prepare the disciples for what was about to happen. He spoke to reassure them of His love for them and the continuing provision that He would give. He told them that He was going to prepare or make ready a dwelling place for Himself in them and that He and the Father would “mansion” with them by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

As we can easily image, they had a lot of questions regarding what was about to happen.

### The Counselor – 14:16-21

<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” John 14:16–21 (ESV)

Jesus had just promised the disciples He would do for them whatever they asked in His name. The logical next question is “would they do whatever He asked (commanded) them to do?” To do that, they (as well as we) need help which is provided by the “Helper.” In the progressive revelation of God, we see that John (the Baptist) came preaching “repent.” Jesus began His ministry and preached “repent and believe.” The evidence of believing (having faith in Him) is that we do what He had been doing (see verse 12). Now, Jesus adds another dimension and that is “obedience.” The path is “repent, believe, and obey” which is simply the plan of salvation.

So, what is the role of the Helper? First, we have the ability to make choices of the direction we will go. We may not have the ability or power to implement our choice. We need help. However, we can repent. Next, God gives to each person a measure of faith. By His grace (the gift of faith) we can believe (Ephesians 2:8-9). Finally, if we are disposed to do what Jesus has commanded (obey), then He enables us to do that by sending the Holy Spirit to abide in us as the Helper.

Using an example of a child who had lost his father, Jesus assured them that they would not be abandoned and without hope. Over the three-and-a-half-year period of time they had been with Jesus, they had become very focused on His teaching and His principles. Their hope was closely linked to Him and the fact that He would no longer be visibly present with them would be devastating to them. This was a difficult thing to explain to them. The fact that He would not be there as He was (in a physical body) yet He would be there as they had never (before) experienced Him (in the person of the Holy Spirit) was a difficult concept to grasp. We still have trouble understanding the concept of the Triune nature of God – there are three distinguishable persons who are in complete unity (inseparable) with each other.

An orphan is powerless and without resources since his parents are dead. By contrast, those who follow Jesus are children of the King of kings Who is ever living. We have access to the riches of heaven and the power of God while we are here on the earth. The world would conclude that Jesus had died and was no longer a factor (could not be seen). However, those who put their trust in Him, see or discern His influence and power all around them.

With the advent of the New Covenant, things were about to change. The disciples as well as the Jews could see Jesus physically with their physical eyes. After the ascension, this would

not be possible. However, they (but not the world) would see (spiritually perceive) the presence, person and power of the Holy Spirit. This is the same as “seeing” Jesus. The “oneness” of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is alluded to by Jesus in that the Holy Spirit was already “with” them since Jesus was with them. (Later the Holy Spirit would be “in” them since the Father and the Son would come to make their abode (mansion) within the believers and doers of the commands of Jesus – see also verse 23.) The reason the unbelieving Jews (and the world) could not “see” (perceive) the Spirit of God is because they were spiritually dead. This inability was what Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:3 that unless a person is born again of the Spirit of God, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

We often think about Jesus’ statement “Because I live, you will live also” as pointing to sometime in the future when each follower of Jesus will be raised up with a glorified body. The hope for this would have its basis in the example of Jesus and His resurrection. In the context of their situation or in a more immediate time frame, they would experience a new life because of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the infusion of life into their “dead spirits” in an event that we refer to as the New Birth or being born again. When that event happens in a person's life, he knows that he has made contact with eternity and that he has the Spirit of God in himself. As Paul put it in his letter to the church in Rome (8:16), the Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

#### The Teacher – 14:22-26

<sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me. <sup>25</sup> “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14:22–26 (ESV)

We can appreciate the fact that Judas was having difficulty figuring out how Jesus was going to make Himself known to those who believe and not to others. Jesus had talked about coming back in several different situations. One example was that He would come (in judgment) with power and great glory in the clouds of heaven and that all would see Him which we can read about in Matthew 24:30. If Judas was thinking that Jesus was going to manifest Himself in such a way, then he wanted to know how that would work. Of course, in this case, Jesus was talking about a completely different situation. His coming to His followers would be different from His coming in judgment. What Jesus was talking about in this instance was the Holy Spirit indwelling each believer which Jesus equated with Himself and the Father abiding in them.

To better understand the context of the statement “If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word,” we can compare that with Jesus’ promise to give them whatever they asked in His name. That could be interpreted as a demonstration of His love for them. He was not granting them a blank check for just anything, however, it would be for anything that was in alignment with His character. In like manner, He wanted them (and us) to demonstrate our love for Him by carrying out his commandments. We could say that obedience is a result of our love of God.

The relationship of obedience and love was mentioned earlier in verse twenty-one. There the order was reversed in that awareness and heeding God ways were the identifying characteristics of those who love God.

God had given us commandments before, so what would be different now that would make it possible for us to obey His commandments? The difference would be the presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had already told them that He was going away; however, the Holy Spirit

would be with them forever. Jesus had helped them, stood by them, comforted them, strengthened and interceded for them. The Holy Spirit would do the same things for them. Jesus had described Himself as the Truth and He referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth. In the immediate past years, the world could see Jesus even though they rejected Him; however, the world would not know nor recognize the Holy Spirit – only true believers would be aware of Him.

In order to participate in the blessings that the Lord has promised, we must be in position to receive the love that He offers. To do that, we must stop running away from God. We must abandon the idea of “I’ll do it my way” and start thinking, saying and acting, “Not my will, but Thy will be done.” From the total evidence of the Scriptures, we can know that God’s will is that we become a “new race” that is not of the first Adam, but is of the second Adam, even Jesus. As such, we become the temple of God in that God is living in us. The marvelous thing about the love of God is that even though He is all powerful and knows what is right for us, He will leave the choice up to us. We must choose whether we want Him in our lives or not. If we love Him, then we will want Him to abide with us and He responds with the follow through of the love that He initiated and directed to us in the beginning. How do we make our choice known? Jesus indicated that the evidence of our love for Him is whether we keep His words. We make our choices of whether we will acknowledge God as God or whether we will ignore Him and do things our own way in the situations that we routinely encounter. Do we keep His sayings or do we do something else?

Jesus was the Great Teacher and He was carrying out that role up to the last night that He would be with the disciples in a physical sense. He was acknowledging that he knew that they were having difficulty understanding all that He had taught them and that they would have need for more instruction. This need would be supplied by the Holy Spirit Who would come in the same nature and type of ministry that Jesus had (“the Father will send in My name”). Everything we need to know about God, His Plan, and His Kingdom is available to us through the Holy Spirit – He will teach us all things.

### The Peace – 14:27-29

<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. <sup>28</sup> You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. John 14:27–29 (ESV)

One of the greatest blessings we ever have is the inner peace that comes from living under God’s rule. This is not just the absence of conflict or war that the world interprets as peace, but is a sense of well-being and joy that transcends our needs and problems and even our successes. God’s peace equips us to go through the successes and failures of life with an inner calm and confidence that is placed in God and not in ourselves. Jesus ended this discourse as He began it with advice that each of us need and that is “Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” As we see the world systems decay and crumble, we can remember that Jesus loves us and that He is in control.

When we know that God loves us, cares for us, knows what is best for us, and has the power to act on our behalf, then we can have an inner quietness that comes from the confidence this brings. Resting in God frees us from anxiety and fear. It also frees us from pride and competitiveness.

Jesus set aside His glory to take on the humility of humanity and now He would return to the glory in which God the Father dwells. The disciples were sad because of their perceived loss

with the pending departure of Jesus. From what they could understand, all that Jesus was talking about was His going or leaving.

Alexander MacLaren noted that Jesus' departure was simply a step in His coming to us to abide with us forever. The spurious addition of the word "again" in verse 28 causes us to think of a coming, separated by a considerable distance of time from the departure, and for most of us that which is suggested is the final coming and return, in bodily form, of the Lord Jesus.

The events starting with Calvary and ending on the Mount of Olives when seen strictly from outward appearance were successive stages in the departure of Jesus Christ. But if viewed with a deeper understanding of their true meaning, they are successive stages in His overall grand approach towards us. His death, His resurrection, His ascension, were not steps in the ending of His presence, but they were simply steps in the transition from a lower to a higher kind of presence. In other words, He changed the limitations of a mere physical bodily presence for the realities of a spiritual presence.

Since the immediate concerns of the disciples were focused on themselves, they did not consider the impact on Jesus of being able to leave the limitations of having an earthly body and being restored to the Heavenly presence with the Father. They should have found a sense of peace (and joy) in Jesus' return to the Father, who is greater than the Son.

Jesus said "the Father is greater than I" and He also said, "the Father and I are one." Are these inconsistent and, therefore, contradictory statements? Since the answer must be "No," then we can look for what is meant by these two statements. One possibility is that while Jesus was fully God and fully man, the picture of God that He was able to show us in His time on earth was clouded or hindered in some ways by the limitation of His humanity. He was never in two or more places at the same time, He traveled from one place to another in the same way other people did, He experienced hunger and thirst, and He became tired. In addition, he was troubled when certain things happened and He struggled with the decisions He faced. Another possibility to explain this anomaly was suggested by Martin Luther in one of his sermons, 'Here He was a poor, sad, suffering Christ;' and that garb of lowliness falls from Him, like the mantle that fell from the prophet as he went up in the chariot of fire, when He passes behind the brightness of the Shekinah cloud that hides Him from our sight. That in which the Father was greater than He, in so far as our present purpose is concerned, was that which He left behind when He ascended, even the pain, the suffering, the sorrow, the restrictions, the humiliation, that made so much of the burden of His life.

How can we apply these concepts involving great changes in our lives to our situation today? Just as the disciples were not considering the greatness of the joy Jesus would experience upon His being with the Father, they also had no idea of the joy they would experience when the Holy Spirit came upon them to empower them for ministry. Additionally, when we are faced with the absence of a Christian friend or relative, we grieve over our loss and sometimes fail to rejoice regarding the joy they will experience in the presence of God. We may also find ourselves failing to rejoice by neglecting to have a conscious awareness of the presence of God through the Spirit in our very lives right now. Jesus said "I and My Father will come and mansion (dwell or abide) with you." Such peace that comes of the conscious awareness of being in Christ and Christ in us is exclusively available to those who repent and believe, who trust and obey in God's only provision for salvation, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.