

The Gospel of John

Preparing the Disciples

John 16:1-7

INTRODUCTION:

For many weeks now, we have been experiencing the night before Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

In our scripture text this morning, Judas has left to betray Jesus. Christ and His disciples have left the upper room and they are on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. During this journey, Jesus continues to prepare His disciples for what lay ahead of them.

Stand and Read Scripture

John 16:1-11 (NASB)

16 “These things I have spoken to you so that you will not be led into sin. ² They will ban you from the synagogue, yet an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering a service to God. ³ These things they will do because they have not known the Father nor Me. ⁴ But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. However, I did not say these things to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

⁵ “But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, grief has filled your heart. ⁷ But I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I am leaving; for if I do not leave, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

Prayer

BODY:

I. PREPARING THE DISCIPLES FOR HIS DEPARTURE.

John 16:1(NASB)

16 “These things I have spoken to you so that you will not be led into sin.

The phrase "**these things**" is referring back to Jesus' warning about the world's hostility toward the disciples in the previous chapter.

John 15:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you.

Because of the world's hate toward Christ, the disciples will be hated also. Jesus wanted them to understand that they were going to be hated and persecuted so they would not be caught off guard when it happened. The phrase "**led into sin**" comes from the noun form of the Greek word **skandalon** (skon' duh lon). This refers to the movable stick or trigger of a trap or snare. It can also be anything that is placed in front of you that would cause you to stumble or fall such as a stretched string or rock.

Listen to the warning that Jesus gave to His disciples on their way to Gethsemane from the upper room.

Matthew 26:31 (NASB)

³¹ Then Jesus *said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

The events that happened later that evening showed the timeliness of Jesus' warning. Even though the anger and hatred was aimed toward Jesus instead of the disciples, the disciples scattered just as Jesus had told them would happen as recorded a few verses later.

Matthew 26:55-56 (NASB)

⁵⁵ At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as *you would* against a man inciting a revolt? Every day I used to sit within the temple *grounds* teaching, and you did not arrest Me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place so that the Scriptures of the prophets will be fulfilled." **Then all the disciples left Him and fled.**

This was just another of a list of things that the disciples found hard to believe. They did not think that they would abandon Jesus or deny Him, but they did. Jesus wanted them to know in advance so their faith would not be destroyed.

II. PREPARING THE DISCIPLES FOR PERSECUTION.

John 16:2a (NASB)

...² They will ban you from the synagogue,

Being excommunicated from the synagogue was a big deal. This would not only cut them off from all religious, social, and economic aspects of Jewish society, but they would be branded as traitors to their people and their God. This could cause them to become jobless and even separated from their families.

John 16:2b (NASB)

...yet an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering a service to God.

Even worse than excommunication, some of Christ's followers would pay with their lives. Many times the enemies of Christ thought that by killing Christians, they were offering service to God.

Paul, before his conversion, was a good example of this. He was going around persecuting Christians with the approval of the chief priests because he thought that Jesus was just a blasphemer claiming to be God.

In Paul's defense before Herod Agrippa, he made the following statement concerning his past.

Acts 26:9-11 (NASB)

⁹ “So I thought to myself that I had to act in strong opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, after receiving authority from the chief priests, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being put to death. ¹¹ And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was extremely enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

After Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul became the hated. The hunter became the hunted.

John 16:3 (NASB)

³ These things they will do because they have not known the Father nor Me.

Instead of serving God, their father is Satan. Jesus told the Pharisees, who thought they were the **ultimate** servants of God, this very thing.

John 8:42-44 (NASB)

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came forth from God and am here; for I have not even come on My own, but He sent Me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is because you **cannot listen to My word.*** ⁴⁴ You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, because he is a liar and the father of lies.

It is so easy to get caught up in our own beliefs that we fail to hear God's Word. The scriptures tell us that "**Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God**". No matter how carefully we follow our own beliefs, if it is not in line with God's Word, it will snare us and lead us to destruction.

John 16:4a (NASB)

⁴ But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

Jesus warned the disciples of things to come, first, to prevent them from stumbling. Now He is telling them that his warnings will also encourage them when they happen because they will remember at that time that they were forewarned.

The disciples obviously got the message. Listen to Peter years later as he echoes Christ's warning.

1 Peter 4:12-13 (NASB)

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though *something* strange were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice and be overjoyed.

When the persecution occurred in the disciples lives, it did not shatter their faith. The hostility they faced actually deepened and strengthened their resolve as they saw Christ's prediction fulfilled and now they could exhort others to remain firm as well.

John 16:4b (NASB)

However, I did not say these things to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

Jesus did not have to warn the disciples of these things during His ministry because He was with them. While He was with them He protected the disciples and bore the brunt of the world's attacks that they would now face in His absence. They would be left to face the full fury of the world's hatred.

John 16:5 (NASB)

⁵ “But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’

Jesus once again tells them that He is going to the cross and back to the Father. These verses present a sharp contrast between the complete selflessness of Jesus and the utter selfishness of the disciples. As the cross loomed ever larger, they should have been comforting Him. He should have been their focus, since the time had come for Him to accomplish His mission and return to the Father who sent Him.

John 16:6 (NASB)

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

Their concern was for themselves and not a concern for Him and what He was about to face. Due to their lack of understanding, they were sad that He was leaving instead of being joyous for what He was about to do. And they were going to abandon Him. They had met the main character but were going to miss the main event. This was going to be a glorious homecoming for Christ because He will have accomplished all that God had sent Him to do.

So Christ once again tries to encourage them by reminding them that He would not leave them as orphans in a world that hates them. He will send the Holy Spirit.

III. PREPARING THE DISCIPLES FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT.

John 16:7 (NASB)

⁷ But I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I am leaving; for if I do not leave, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

For the disciples, the thought that Jesus was going to be betrayed, die on the cross, be resurrected, and return to heaven would seem to be the end of all their hopes. But Jesus tells them that it was advantageous for them that he leave.

A. Jesus was Spatially Limited.

Jesus asserted that He was not a spirit even after resurrection. Remember the two disciples that Jesus appeared to on the road to Emmaus? When they recognized Jesus he left them and they immediately went to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what they had experienced. Then Jesus appeared before them.

Luke 24:37-40 (NASB)

³⁷ But they were startled and frightened, and thought that they were looking at a spirit. ³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why are doubts arising in your hearts? ³⁹ See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you *plainly* see that I have." ⁴⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

What Jesus seemed to imply was that He could not be present at two places at the same time. It would seem that He could appear and vanish at will and did not have to walk through a door, but we never see an example of Jesus being at two places at the same time before or after the resurrection. It appeared that Jesus was spatially limited in His Divine-Human nature. This is not the case with the Holy Spirit. As the comforter was needed to be present with everyone at the same time Jesus says, "It is expedient that I go away".

B. Jesus had to Complete His Work.

Jesus had to complete his work before the Spirit could begin his. The Spirit's ministry is to reveal the person and works of Christ. That was not fully possible until after Christ finished His work of redemption on the cross, resurrected from the dead, and ascended to His full glory in heaven.

John 16:13 (NASB)

¹³ But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

If you think about it, Jesus actually went away from the disciples twice: once for 3 days and nights from His death on the cross to the resurrection, and again at His ascension into heaven.

- It was at the cross that Jesus defeated Satan.
- He completed a perfect life on earth so that He could become a perfect sacrifice for mankind.
- He paid the price of Our Redemption. A debt we could not pay.
- He took away our sins and replaced them with His righteousness.
- He took away the fear of death.

Jesus had to go away to accomplish these things.

After the resurrection, Jesus still had not gone away to His Father in heaven. It was still possible for those who saw Him to just "go check Him out" and see the risen Lord. That was physical proof of His death, burial, and resurrection. No faith would be required. But when He ascended to heaven that possibility ceased to exist.

When He ascended into heaven, He was no longer going to be with them. That is when He asked His Father to send the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to begin His ministry.

CONCLUSION:

Persecution of Christianity comes from religion that doesn't know God or Christ. All the religions of the world except true Christianity are satanic, and they all hate God. They don't know God; they don't know Christ. That is Satan's great deception. The Jews, the

Romans, and all the other false religions have created their own god. That god, despite its appearance, is really Satan masquerading as god. They persecute Christians.

Jesus warns not only them, but us as well that, as a true follower, the world will hate us. We live in a part of the world where we do not face many trials or persecution and I believe that can be detrimental to our walk with Christ due to complacency. Remember when I said that it does not matter how closely we follow our own beliefs because, if it is not in line with the Word of God, it can lead us to destruction? **Listen carefully** to what Jesus told His disciples **and indirectly to us as well** as He was preparing them for what lie ahead.

Luke 9:22-26 (NASB)

²² ...“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised on the third day.”

²³ And He was saying to *them* all, “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, this is the one who will save it. ²⁵ For what good does it do a person if he gains the whole world, but loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and *the glory* of the Father and the holy angels.

Why were the apostles persecuted? Their persecution did not come from within the comfort of the church where they were preaching and teaching. Their persecution occurred because they were willing to go out into the world and share the Gospel to those who did not know Christ.

They were not ashamed to share the Gospel! Here is how Paul explained it to the Romans.

Romans 1:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

I wonder if we are spending too much time accomplishing the things that we face in this world on a personal level. I wonder if we are putting too much effort into our jobs and personal tasks that we face each day and failing to share the Gospel with the world along the way. We tend to become comfortable in our **own** faith and do not want to disturb others who need to know about Christ. It is true that we may upset some people that we interrupted their day but we are asked to surrender our life of comfort to serve Christ. **If we are not being treated harshly by the world, maybe we are too much like the world!**

So our Lord offers us not a way of ease, but a hard way, a narrow way. He calls for those who are willing to open their eyes to the venture and see it for what it is: denying self, taking up your cross, and following Him.

I would encourage you to pray this week for the strength and courage to take some time this week to tell someone God places within your path about Christ. Invite them to church and Bible study.

He is Lord.