

The Gospel of John

The Promise of Direct Access to God

John 16:23-27

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, Christ and His disciples have nearly arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus is going to pray. One of the main things on the Lord's mind that night was the Holy Spirit would come in a new way after Jesus returned back to His Father in Heaven.

Now, as we come to this text, our Lord is going to say His last few words to the eleven disciples. The words began the night before His crucifixion in chapter 13 and have now run all the way to the end of chapter 16. He has made them all kinds of promises and given them all kinds of warnings. His words have saturated and confused their minds. They are beginning to sense the reality that Jesus is about to die and leave them. They are full of concern and full of anxiety. While He has been with them, they have had someone to ask questions and get answers. He has delivered them from every issue and provided everything they need.

But now, He was dying and He was leaving. In addition to that, He has told them, "You are going to be persecuted the same way I am being persecuted." You are going to be hated, resented, and rejected. **And** this is going to go on through all of human history to everyone who are followers of Christ. And they are even going to kill you and believe that they are serving God when they do.

So, as our Lord closes in verses 23-27, He makes one last promise before He goes into the Garden to pray. That promise is **The Promise of Direct Access to God**.

Stand and Read Scripture

John 16:23-27 (NASB)

²³ And on that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you in figures of speech; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father.

²⁶ On that day you will ask in My name, and I am not saying to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; ²⁷ for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

Prayer

BODY:

I. THE TRUTH WILL BE REVEALED.

John 16:23a (NASB)

²³ And on that day you will not question Me about anything...

So, at the present, they are not clear on a lot of things. But the day is coming when it will all become clear.

John 16:12 (NASB)

¹² "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* at the present time.

Jesus says I cannot currently go any further with My teachings. We are going to have to get on the other side of the cross, the other side of the resurrection, and the other side of the coming of the Holy Spirit before, you are going to fully understand.

Try to place yourself in their situation. You have no New Testament, the cross has not happened, the resurrection has not occurred, and the Holy Spirit has not arrived. Your mind is full of teachings from Jesus that you are still trying to interpret. Things concerning events that has not even happened yet.

But Jesus tells them that a time is coming when you will understand.

"And on that day". In verse 25 He says "An hour is coming.". In verse 26 He says "In that day".

What day and hour is He referring to?

You say, it could be after the resurrection when He met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and explained how He fulfilled all of the prophecies concerning Him. Or it could be when He met them in the upper room in Luke 24. Or it could be the 40 days between His resurrection and His ascension when He spoke to them of things concerning the kingdom of God. But the best and most complete explanation of the day that is coming is the hour when the Holy Spirit is sent on the Day of Pentecost.

We already know that He has promised the Holy Spirit in chapters 14 and 15 and always identified Him as the Spirit of truth. The Spirit of truth will remove the veil. The veiled teachings will be uncovered and made clear.

John 16:25 (NASB)

²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you in figures of speech; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father.

Now, think of it this way. Jesus spoke in figurative language. Jesus spoke in parables, right? And parables hid truth from people who did not get an explanation. The parables had to be explained to the disciples and often they still did not completely understand. They were part of His initial instruction.

Here is an interesting fact: no one in the rest of the New Testament, from the end of the gospels to the end of Revelation, ever taught using a parable. Everything is direct and straightforward. The veil has been removed. After the cross, the resurrection, the ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit everything is unveiled.. The Holy Spirit

comes to take up residence in the life of the believer and to be a teacher. The Holy Spirit inspires the writing of the New Testament, where all the veils are removed. This is an explanation of everything that Jesus introduced in the gospels.

So, the hour is coming. The “**hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.**” That will be the Holy Spirit who, remember, is the Spirit of Christ. Christ comes back in the Spirit of Christ. This is the mystery of the Trinity. I will speak plainly, and the plain speaking of the Spirit of Christ is recorded in the New Testament. Now we have all these 27 books that take out all the mystery and obliterate all the darkness and make everything light.

What did John mean by “**these things**”?

Everything Jesus had taught them. Not just that night, but all the things He had been saying to them all along in three years of teaching and instruction. It was all about the Father. It is all about the Father. Everything He ever said was to reveal the Father. But all of it was in **figurative** language. His teachings were true, but they were veiled.

Jesus spoke about being the light. He spoke about being water. He spoke about being bread. He spoke about the temple and His body. He spoke about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. He said things like, “Before Abraham was, I am.” And even though there was truth in all of this, there was a veil over it. And now, He has talking about dying, and rising, and leaving. Now, there was enough truth in everything Jesus taught to remove any excuse for not believing in Him. There was enough truth in what He taught to know that He was God, He was the Savior, He was the Messiah, and why He had come.

But, there was not always enough to understand everything, and He was speaking in figurative language because there were things that had not happened that He could not fully explain because the disciples were not prepared to understand it. The cross, the resurrection, the ascension, the sending of the Holy Spirit. He had said a lot of things about the Father, but there was still a veil. It was not a full explanation.

They were very reluctant to believe that He would die and leave, because they thought He was going to set up an earthly kingdom, and they had all of their personal ambition tied to that. They did not want Him to die. They did not want Him to leave. That was not in the plan. And so, they created something of their **own veil**, and then they were also veiled by years and years of instruction in a false Judaism that had created all of these expectations. They had misinterpreted the Old Testament scriptures and failed to teach of a Messiah who would suffer, die, and rise again for the salvation of mankind.

II. PRAY IN MY NAME.

Jesus starts verse 23 by saying there will be a time when you will no longer need to question Him about anything. I will not be here, and you will not need to ask Me. Then He continues and explains why.

John 16:23b-24 (NASB)

Truly, truly I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything **in My name**, He will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked for nothing **in My name**; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full. Truly, truly I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything **in My name**, He will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked for nothing **in My name**; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

Now, when the Spirit comes, you will have direct access to the Father. This is really a stunning thing to the Jewish people. Because, to them, God was distant and veiled. God was symbolically in the Holy of Holies. Only a high priest could go in there, and he could only go in once a year. He had to get in and get out fast, or judgment might fall on him. He did not have access to God. But at the cross – you remember the veil was ripped from the top to the bottom? The Holy of Holies was exposed, and God was saying, “Now everybody has free access to Me.”

So, Jesus says, “Look, in the age of the Spirit, you do not need to ask Me. You can ask the Father **"In My name."**

What do you mean, “In My name?”

It means that we have direct access to God. We no longer have to go through a high priest. We can talk directly to God because Jesus made it possible for us. It is a privilege that was handed over to us. According to **verse 24**, it is **“so that your joy may be made full.”** Direct access to God.

This was absolutely alien to the Judaism of the time. God was distant. God was far away. You did not even talk about God as your Father. Maybe you talked about Him as the Father of all creatures, or the Father of the nation of Israel, but you did not become intimate with God.

You are going to have direct access to God. That does not mean that Jesus does not intercede for us. But listen, He intercedes for us on the matters over which we have no insight and knowledge and wisdom. But we have direct access to God for things we desire and ask for. When we ask according to will of Christ, the Father will respond.

You can go directly to the Father in My name,” which is to say: “I come because Jesus invited me to come.” I will ever live to make intercession for you on matters about which you know nothing. I will fight the battle on the divine level for you. You have complete access to God.”

III. PRAY DIRECTLY TO THE FATHER.

John 16:26 (NASB)

26 On that day you will ask in My name, and I am not saying to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf;

What does that mean? Once the Holy Spirit arrives you will be able to talk to the Father personally. You do not need to come to Jesus or a high priest and have Him request something of the Father for you.

That is been how the relationship between Jesus and the eleven disciples worked up to now. Whatever they needed, they went to Jesus. He was taking their requests to the Father. But when the Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence in their life, they are going to be able to talk directly to the Father.

That alone sets Christianity apart from Judaism in a significant way. What we learn from the revealed truth is that we are now priests.

In many religions, a priest's most important role is as mediator and intercessor, offering prayers and sacrifices on behalf of believers in order to secure the deity's forgiveness and favor in this life and, in the afterlife, eternal bliss.

The Bible teaches that all Christians are priests. Christ's church is actually a kingdom of priests. As Christians we no longer need to go through an earthly priest to reach God the Father. Rather, we all have direct access to Him through our risen High Priest in heaven, Jesus Christ. As a result, Christians may pray directly to God for all their needs and wants.

1 Peter 2:4-5 (NASB)

⁴ And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by people, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as **living stones**, are **being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood**, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Under the Old Covenant, the priests ministered in the temple, where the Ark of the Covenant rested in a room called the Holy of Holies which was closed off to everyone but the high priest by a large, heavy, ornate curtain. The blood of sacrificial bulls was sprinkled on top of the Ark's Mercy Seat to atone for the sins of the people. But, when Jesus was crucified, the curtain split from top to bottom.

Matthew 27:51 (NASB)

⁵¹ And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.

This showed that all believers now have direct access to God's presence. We can now approach God confidently in prayer through faith in His Son's blood instead of the blood of animals. It is because of Jesus' perfect sacrifice that we can each enter the Most Holy Place.

Hebrews 10:19-22 (NASB)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers *and sisters*, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, *through His flesh*, ²¹ and since *we have a great priest over the house of God*, ²² let's approach *God* with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

The death of Jesus ended the Old Testament priesthood, replacing the endless animal sacrifices with one final, perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Now forgiveness is offered freely to all who believe in the risen Lord Jesus Christ as our sacrifice for sin. That is the gospel message—the good news—that we Christians as a church individually share as “priests” of God's kingdom.

John 16:27 (NASB)

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

God loves us despite all of our sin. He knows everything about us. You can get people to love you if you do not tell them everything. Right? As soon as you start telling them

everything, the group gets smaller. But with God, He loves you, and He knows absolutely everything there is to know about you. All your unfaithfulness, all your critical spirit, all your bitterness, all your sin. But He likes you, and He has strong, unending affection for you.

Now, how did we get this love? "**Because you have loved Me.**" If you love the Son that God loves, then God loves you.

Remember what Jesus said...

John 14:21 (NASB)

²¹ The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him."

If you want God to love you with lavish affection? Then love His Son.

CONCLUSION:

By the way, that is what it means to be a Christian. It does not mean belonging to an organization or a tradition; it means to love the Lord Jesus Christ, to love Him with a love that leads to obedient service and worship.

Do you want to be loved at the highest level?

Do you want to be loved by God?

Then love His Son and you will live in the riches of that love your whole life. People may come in and out of your life, and love you, and turn against you, and disappoint you, but you will be loved by One whose love will never stop and never diminish.

If a person receives love like that, he can suffer anything. Bring it on. Put me in jail. Kill me. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is –" what? "Gain." When I die, I just enter into the lavishness of eternal love.

God loved us so much that He was willing to send His Son to die on the cross for our salvation. Christ's death on the cross made it possible for us to have a direct loving relationship with God. God should be our closest friend. If He is our best friend, we will pray without ceasing. Your prayer can be audible or silent, private or public, formal or informal, but all prayer must be offered in faith in the name of Jesus. Do you keep a running conversation going with God all day long?

1 John 4:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us.

Go Tell it on the Mountain.