

The Gospel of John

Lesson 10

John 14 - John 15

The meal is over and so is the Lord's Supper. Peter has been warned that he will deny the Lord three times before the cock crows in the morning. Judas has already left the room to make his deal with the Sanhedrin. Now it is time for Jesus to give his apostles a warning.

An event in the life of Jesus from the other Gospels not included in John's Gospel

EVENT	SCRIPTURE PASSAGE
Jesus warns the disciples to be prepared.	Luke 22:35-38

John does not include the warning to His apostles to be prepared to defend themselves against those who will seek to kill them, but Luke does. Jesus reminds them of the mission trip He sent them on without money, purse, bag or sandals, telling them that all their needs would be provided by people along the way. But now they need to prepare to defend themselves against those who would seek them out in order to kill them. They will need a sword, even if they have to sell something to buy it, because they will be considered transgressors. This time they must now take everything they need as they go. No longer will everything be provided, and keep their faith will be difficult. The apostles have two swords among them. "It is enough," the Lord replies. They will need only one in the garden when He is arrested and Peter will use it.

After the warning, the Lord shares some of the most comforting words found in the story. Matthew, Mark and Luke fail to include this passage in their Gospels. It is a most gratifying addition to the story that has been used throughout time to bring comfort during funerals.

Jesus comforts the disciples

John ^{14:1} "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ "And you know the way where I am going."

Jesus knows what it means to have a heavy heart because it is a natural occurrence in life. When it occurs, the only remedy is belief in God and the Lord Jesus. Comfort can come because Jesus has promised an eternal resting place in heaven, a place to dwell, a place prepared for each believer. Just as Jesus had sent Peter and John to prepare the upper room for the Passover earlier that morning, the Lord is going to prepare a place for all who believes in Him as their Savior. Here Jesus gives the most blessed of all the promises, the promise that He will return for each believer when it is his time to be with the Lord. All the apostles want to be with Him eternally. He gives them this promise and then extends it to all believers. The path to the Father's house is now plain. Jesus is going there and will return to take them there to be with Him. He is the way to the Father's dwelling place.

Jesus responds to Thomas

John ^{14:5} Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no

one comes to the Father but through Me. ⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

Thomas does not understand the words of the Lord. He is still having trouble with the concept of eternity so Jesus responds very plainly stating that He is the only way to the Father and the eternal place of rest. When Jesus spoke with Martha, He called Himself "the life."¹¹⁸ When He spoke with the Pharisees, He called Himself "the door."¹¹⁹ When He spoke with the apostles, He called Himself "the light of the world."¹²⁰ In this passage, Jesus sums it all up for Thomas by saying that He is the way, the truth, and the life, the only way to God the Father.

Jesus responds to Philip

John 14:8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. ¹¹ "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. ¹² "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father. ¹³ "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹²¹ ¹⁴ "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*. ¹⁵ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. ¹⁶ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

Philip too does not understand the words that Jesus has repeatedly said to him concerning His relationship with the Father. He also fails to understand the authority the Lord has given him and the others to continue the work. Jesus is promising in this discourse to answer their prayers in the future as they continue the ministry, allowing them to perform even greater signs and works than He has performed. Jesus had invested this authority in them when He sent them out to minister without Him a few months before.¹²² He tells the apostles, "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."¹²³ It is a staggering promise made only to the apostles; it is not a promise to the church as a whole. Jesus is directing His promise to Philip, but the other ten are with Him and the promise is for them too. Jesus expects more out of these men than anyone else in the coming history of the church. They will be the ones to spread His story to the world. They are His apostles and they need to have the same authority over circumstances

¹¹⁸ John 11:25

¹¹⁹ John 10:7

¹²⁰ John 8:12

¹²¹ Exodus 3:14

¹²² Matthew 10:5

¹²³ John 14:12

that He has as the Son of Man, the Son of God, to prove who they are and Whom they serve. But they will not be left to their own doings; the Son will send the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them in their ministries.

Paul expands on this thought in Ephesians 4, stating that the Lord gives gifts to those who are led by the Holy Spirit to build the body of Christ.

Eph 4:¹ Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." ⁹ ~~(Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)~~ ¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

The Lord delegates apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers in the five offices of the church. All of these officers are to be guided by the Holy Spirit in their work, but only the apostles are promised the ability to perform the miraculous signs at this meeting with the Lord in the upper room. The other four offices will not have that ability, and when the last apostle dies in AD 98, no one else ever performs such miraculous signs again. Jesus has told the eleven that He is about to go to heaven but that He will come and get them later. Then Jesus says, "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." Jesus is speaking of His resurrection, but the apostles simply do not understand what He is talking about even though He promises to disclose Himself to them. But Jesus adds the point about keeping His commandments in order to show that they love Him and, in turn, love the Father. It is very confusing, so Judas, not Iscariot, speaks up.

Jesus responds to Judas (not Iscariot)

John 14:²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" ²³ Jesus answered and said to 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 abode with him. ²⁴ "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. ²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. ²⁶ "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 said to you. ²⁷ "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. ²⁸ "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go

to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ "Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.

When Jesus is speaking of not disclosing Himself to the world, He is not speaking about the trees, rivers, mountains and valleys; He is speaking about the people who do not consider Him to be the Lord of all or accept Him as their Savior. Since Jesus walked on this earth, almost all people understand and accept the fact that He was a real man who lived in Israel. The issue arises over whether or not they believe He is God and the Savior of the World. For those who love Him as their Savior, He gives a wonderful promise, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." In this passage, Jesus promises to come with the Father to gather all those who love Him and take them to live with both Him and the Father forever. But Jesus is aware that all this information is too much for the eleven at this time, so He confirms that the Holy Spirit will help them remember all these things in the future when they need to recall the Lord's words. Troubles will come their way; in fact, trouble is about to come in the next few hours, but the Lord also promises them peace that the world cannot understand, a heavenly peace that people who live without the Lord in their lives cannot understand.

They leave the upper room

Also in Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26.

John 14:30 "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; ³¹ but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.¹²⁴

The time has come for Jesus and the eleven to leave the upper room and go across to the garden to pray. We do not know how long they are in the upper room; neither do we know exactly when they leave. With the addition of the Lord's Supper, the foot washing, and the lengthy messages from the Lord, this Passover celebration takes longer than it does in the households of other Jews observing the same event. When all has been said in that setting, the Lord leads them out into the night's dark streets and the conversation continues along the way to Gethsemane. Matthew, Mark and Luke do not include the following conversations recorded in John 15 through 17.

Discourse on the way to the garden – Abide in Me

John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷ "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. ⁹ "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's

¹²⁴ Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26 state that Jesus and the apostles sang a song as they left the upper room.

commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

Leaving the place where they have just inaugurated the Lord's Supper with the wine and the bread, the metaphor of the vine is a logical transition to make this important point. Once a limb is cut from a vine, it will die; the life of the limb is totally dependent on the plant to which it is attached. We can understand this concept because we have all seen what happens to a limb when it is cut from a tree and left on the ground for a day. Within 24 hours the leaves have withered and begun to fall off the branch. Within another seven days all the moisture is out of the small limbs and they are brittle and can be burned easily with the strike of a match. Without the nutrition and water provided by the plant, the limb dies. So too, without the Lord, the spiritual life of a person dies, withering away without nourishment and life sustaining water. The branch cannot produce its fruit without the plant. A Christian cannot produce fruit for the Lord without the nourishment provided by the Lord. How does a Christian stay attached to the system of the Lord? The answer is to love Him and live in His love.

Love one another

John ^{15:12} "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³ "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ "You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. ¹⁷ "This I command you, that you love one another. ¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it* hated you.

However, simply loving the Lord is not enough; love must be spread to those who surround us. True love for others is shown by the help we give them in their time of need. Jesus is about to show His followers the degree of love He has for them when He lays down His life for their eternal salvation.

The eleven men with Him are the apostles He chose to be His inner circle about 18 months before. He chose them; they did not choose him. The Lord makes them a promise that is not without limitations and conditions; it is a promise for them only. "Whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you," Jesus promises. Notice the limitation includes the words "He may give to you." It is not a sure deal that whatever they ask He will give. Why? They must remain in the vine and love the Lord. They must remain in the will of the Father, attached through Jesus Christ. They will bear fruit that will remain when they show their love for Him by loving others. Even though the world will hate the apostles, they are to love the people in the world; nevertheless, they are the first to be hated by the world because it hated Jesus first.

Jesus is changing the relationship with His apostles. Until this time, they are followers of the Lord like slaves who work for their master. Now, Jesus is raising their status from a slave who works for Him to a friend who is willing to do anything for Him because of love for one another. The apostles still struggle with this concept but soon, when He has given His life for them, they will understand and continue bearing fruit because of that love. In the coming days, they will prove themselves worthy to be called His friend.

Persecution to come

John 15:19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. ²² "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ "He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. ²⁵ "But *they have done this* to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'

The existence of Christians is a reproach to the world, not so with other faiths, false faiths which exist without hope. Christianity is under attack worldwide. Until 1985, America was safe on its mainland from the attacks of the world and its faith in Christ. Since that time, the mainland has suffered great loss with attacks from the hatred of other faiths from without and within. Those who are hated by the world are those who are the most like Christ. It is the reason that on the surface, the world seems to praise the words of Lord, but they dread the thought of truly living by them. The world and other faiths hate Christianity. For the apostles, the Jews will be their biggest enemies over the next 60 years after Christ's death and resurrection. They will be persecuted like Jesus to fulfill the prophecy.¹²⁵

Jesus will send the Helper

John 15:26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, ²⁷ and you *will* testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Once again, the Lord returns to the promise of the Helper Whom He will send later to guide them in their ministries and to remind them of all the things He has said to them. The Holy Spirit's mission is to bring glory to the Lord. It should be our mission also.¹²⁶ We are to let the Holy Spirit teach us and lead us; it is at this point that we fail as Christians the most. But the apostles will not fail in the long run. They will share the story of the Lord throughout the known world, from the impoverished of the streets to the Caesars in the palaces.

¹²⁵ John 16:33; Mark 10:30; Luke 21:12; 1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 4:9; Galatians 4:29; 2 Tim. 3:12

¹²⁶ John 16:14