

## THURSDAY 14 April 2022 "The Counselor" John 14 & 15

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

*Today is a special day on the calendar of Christians around the world.* Some call this "Maundy Thursday" because of the events recorded in John's Gospel and attributed to Thursday evening before the Friday Jesus was crucified, that Passover weekend about 2000 years ago, in Jerusalem. All this week I've been inviting us to join the gathering in that 'upper room' where Jesus and His disciples are celebrating the Passover meal. I think it's fair to say the expectations of the disciples and the expectations of Jesus were very different as they mounted the steps to that 'upper room' that evening. As John tells us in John 13:1 **"Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father..."**. Jesus also knew the devil had prompted one of His own disciples, Judas Iscariot, to make a betrayal contract with some of the religious leaders and later that evening that betrayal would be accomplished in the Garden of Gethsemane, after this Passover meal.

*For Jesus, these hours with His disciples were strategic, for it would be their final time of intense teaching from Jesus before His horrific death on the cross the next day.* Of course, the disciples were oblivious to what would soon happen. Jesus again returned to His theme of the importance of steadfast love in His relationship with His Father; His relationship with God's people; and our relationship with Him. **"If you love Me, you will obey what I command."** (John 14:15) A few moments later Jesus said it again, only this time with practical emphasis: **"If anyone loves Me, they will obey My teachings. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does NOT love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own, they belong to the Father who sent Me."** (John 14:23,24) Do we understand my friends? *Obeying the teachings of Jesus is a matter of love, thus disobedience of God is a love problem.* The person who knowingly disobeys God loves themselves more than they love God. They love their agenda, their life plans, their desires more than they love following God. Those disciples were strong-willed men, every one of them, and these were very challenging words from Jesus... are they also challenging for you and me?

Jesus then said something that amazed them: **"I am going to the Father... and I will ask the Father and He will send you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be IN you. I will not leave you as orphans..."** (John 14:16-18) This idea of Jesus leaving them was deeply troubling. They couldn't understand WHY He would leave nor WHERE He would go when He left them. They also didn't understand WHAT they were supposed to do in His absence nor how long He'd be gone. While on the one hand this evening together was wonderful and encouraging, from time-to-time Jesus said things to these men that confused and deeply troubled them.

But here Jesus was making it clear He was not abandoning them but rather God the Father would send God the Holy Spirit TO them as a Counselor for them, just as Jesus had been. *God's Spirit would be both WITH them as a group, as Jesus had been, but also IN them each... a personal, private, powerful relationship with God beyond what they had as yet experienced.* Can you imagine God being WITH you, personally, guiding you, Counseling you all the time?

Jesus continued: ***"All this I have spoken while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace, I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*** (John 14:25-27) Peace... such an elusive state of mind and heart. As these men had walked with Jesus over these months, so many times He had told them not to be afraid, not to have troubled hearts. But it's one thing to deal with anxiety when the great miracle worker is there, in person, with all His power. It was another thing for them to consider what life would be like without Jesus. The questions were so many they didn't even want to consider the first one... *how could they have peace WITHOUT Jesus present with them? How could the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, give them each the same peace Jesus had given them by His presence and His power?*

I doubt any of them were thinking deeply theological thoughts at that time, but did you notice friends in that one statement, Jesus was reminding them, and us, of the miraculous 'Trinity' aspect of God. Look at what Jesus said: ***"The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name..."*** there they are, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit all three in the one verse, each having a unique role in this action Jesus describes: God the Father would **send the Holy Spirit, by His authority and according to His great purpose** for His people and His glory. God the Holy Spirit would come here to earth, sent by God the Father, **for the specific purpose of teaching these disciples and helping them to remember** what Jesus, God the Son, had taught them, when He was with them. And Jesus, God the Son, **would be again back in heaven** from which He had come to earth to accomplish God's Redemption mission. Now, back in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, Jesus would then have a new mission & purpose... **save completely any and all who trust in Him and repent of their sin (Hebrews 7:25) and intercede with the Father for God's people and the accomplishment of God's purposes.** (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:3)

While I doubt these disciples understood it, this wonderful teaching and reminding role of the Holy Spirit would be absolutely critical to them for accomplishing what Jesus would very soon commission them to do for the remainder of their lives... ***"... go and make disciples of all people, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all I have taught you..."*** (Matt. 28:19,20) Remember my friends, *they did not have the New Testament as you and I do. All they had was memories that the Holy Spirit would remind them of, and fresh, new understanding of Jesus' teachings that the Holy Spirit would speak into their hearts and minds so they could teach others.*

Do you see the vital role of the Holy Spirit working individually in each of them as they scattered after Jesus' resurrection, and took the story of Jesus all over the Roman Empire?

In addition, several of the men reclining around the Passover table that evening would be led by the Holy Spirit to write the story of Jesus or deeper teachings of God's truth. Those writings would be then translated into the various languages of the world, and printed, and dispersed to the far ends of the earth. **Matthew was there that night**, and as we've seen he was led by the Holy Spirit to write the story of Jesus primarily aimed at helping Jews across the Roman Empire understand that Jesus is **'the Christ'**, their Messiah! **John was there that night**, and he would write 5 books we have in our New Testament. His story of Jesus primarily helping us to know Jesus as a real person, a dear friend who deeply loved all people and gave His life so we might become the people of God. John was also led by the Holy Spirit to write three personal letters to encourage various groups of people who needed encouragement. Finally, when exiled to Patmos Island, John was led by the Holy Spirit to write the vision titled **"The Revelation"**, giving all of us a glimpse of the future with King Jesus. Finally, **Peter, who was of course there that night**, would be led by the Holy Spirit to write two very powerful letters of encouragement to first century Christians across the empire who were suffering greatly in persecution.

A little later Jesus again returned to this theme of the Holy Spirit by saying to His friends: ***"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about Me. And you also must testify for you have been with Me from the beginning."*** (John 15:26,27) Their life priority was going to be telling the story of Jesus as often as they could, for the rest of their lives. Sometimes it would be welcome news and they would be celebrated by the hearers. Other times there would be angry responses by those who didn't want to hear anything about Jesus. ***But at all times, in all types of situations, the Holy Spirit would be empowering them to speak God's truth, as He empowered and guided Jesus!***

And finally, Jesus said something hard for them to hear: ***"Now I am going to Him who sent Me... and you are filled with grief. I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away the Counselor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send Him to you.... I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth.."*** (John 16:5-7, 12,13) Can you imagine how that pierced their hearts, my friends? ***How could it be possibly better for them if Jesus left them?*** Do you sometimes read God's truth or sense in your heart the Holy Spirit is leading you to accept a hard truth? For these disciples, as wonderful as it was for Jesus to be with them, in His human body He was limited to being in one place at one time. ***But God is omnipresent and so the Holy Spirit coming to reside IN each follower of Jesus allows each of us to have the 'undivided attention' of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit with us wherever we are, at all times!***

Are you living in that remarkable, powerful, joy filled reality my friends?

Oh, there is so much more in these four glorious chapters that John gives us of that evening in the upper room with Jesus, but for today let's celebrate the wonderful promises of Jesus regarding the Holy Spirit of God with us.

**Today's Scripture is John 14 & 15.**