

# John 16:4-33 – The Father Loves You

## Intro

- Last week we looked at the passage where Jesus tells his followers, “The world hates you.”
  - o This isn’t necessarily a message that makes us feel all warm and fuzzy inside.
  - o As this meme puts it: “When you are told the Christian life is easy peezy lemon squeezey...but John 15:18-25 informs you it is difficult difficult lemon difficult.”
  - o At this point in the conversation, the disciples are probably looking something like the first century equivalent of the second panel.
  - o (1-4a) The reason Jesus tells his followers this is so that we will not be shocked, outraged, or discouraged when we encounter hatred or opposition.
    - It is part of the Christian life and should be expected.
    - It should be seen as a good sign and an honor when you are so much like Jesus that you are treated like him.
    - By Acts 5:40-42 the disciples have taken this to heart and rejoice when they face opposition and physical harm for the name of Jesus.
  
- (4b-6) For now, the disciples are not comforted by what Jesus has been telling them.
  - o He needs to tell them this now because when he is no longer visibly/physically present all the world’s opposition will fall on them.
  - o They have not really thought about the implications of where Jesus is going and why.
    - They’ve asked him where he’s going more as an objection (No! Don’t leave!) rather than a desire to understand.
    - Now Jesus is going to tell the why they do not need to be distressed that he is leaving and that the world will hate them.
  - o By extension, this is why we do not need to be distressed or discouraged.
    - Jesus’ followers will be hated by the world, but they are loved by the Father.
    - In this section, Jesus talks about four comforts that will come out of what is about to happen.
    - These are comforts that should help us face the hatred and opposition of the world with courage, joy, and faithfulness.
    - Quite a bit of this is more-or-less a repetition of what Jesus has said earlier in this farewell speech; he *really* wants his followers to grasp these truths.

## (7-15) The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

- (7) Jesus leaving means that he will send the Holy Sprite to be with his followers.
  - o I think the disciples (and maybe us as well) were probably tempted to say, “We’d rather have *you* visibly/physically present; this doesn’t seem like an improvement.”
  - o In his humanity, Jesus was only visibly/physically present in one place at a time.

- Now through the indwelling Holy Spirit, every single one of Jesus' followers has the constant presence of God in their life encouraging, guiding, and empowering.
- (8-11) The Holy Spirit helps us to be faithful witnesses by bringing conviction in the world.
  - *Conviction* here has the idea of showing something for what it truly is.
  - (9) About sin:
    - As long as a person has not trusted in Jesus to forgive their sins, they should feel guilty, uncomfortable, and anxious about that.
    - We have all done wrong things that cut us off from God (Romans 3:23), and if not taken care of by faith in Jesus we face eternal condemnation (John 3:18)
  - (10) About righteousness:
    - Jesus will not be visibly present teaching about righteousness as he did during the years of his earthly ministry.
    - But the Holy Spirit will be pointing to faith in Jesus as the only way to be righteous (Romans 4:5) as Jesus has secured salvation for his own and returned to the Father (Hebrews 1:3b).
  - (11) About judgment:
    - Satan has already been condemned and his final defeat is inevitable.
    - Those who do not know Jesus will face the same condemnation (Matthew 25:41)
  - We have the responsibility of sharing the Gospel, but it is the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts of those who accept it.
    - You cannot convince someone to trust in Jesus by forceful argument or persistent pestering; conviction and drawing are God's responsibility.
    - Our responsibility is to share the Gospel as clearly and kindly as possible when given the opportunity to do so and leave the results up to the Holy Spirit.
- (12-13) Besides his convicting work in the world, the Holy Spirit works in the life of believers to help us better understand God's Word.
  - For the original disciples, he will help them understand the truths that they are incapable of grasping at this point (similar things already said in 14:26 & 15:27).
    - He will help them understand the implications of what Jesus has said and done.
    - He will fill in some details of future events (*cf* 1 Thessalonians & Revelation).
    - These men will write the words of God the Father and his perfect self-revelation, God the Son through the power & guidance of God the Holy Spirit.
  - (14-15) Everything that they write in the power & guidance of the Holy Spirit is from Jesus and brings him glory.
    - I have recently seen people making a distinction between "what the Bible says" and "what Jesus says."

- They try to pit “the red letters” of Jesus’ direct speech against the teaching of Jesus’ Spirit-inspired apostles, and that is just nonsense.
- We don’t get to ignore parts of Scripture that make us uncomfortable just because they are not direct quotes from Jesus during his earthly ministry.
- All Scripture is from God, whether directly spoken by God the Son or breathed out by God the Holy Spirit through his chosen apostles & prophets (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- The same Holy Spirit who guided the writes of Scripture guides us in understanding and applying these words to our life (1 Corinthians 2:14-16).
  - Through the indwelling Spirit, we have a greater capacity for understanding God’s revealed will than the disciples did during Jesus’ public ministry!
  - Are we taking advantage of it?

## **(16-22) The Joy of the Resurrection**

- (16-18) The disciples are having a hard time understanding what is about to happen.
  - “What on earth does he mean by you won’t see me and then you will see me and then I am going to the Father?!”
  - We can’t be too hard on them: they do not yet have the indwelling Holy Spirit and they are living in the middle of events while we know the whole story.
  - All four of the Gospels point out the disciples’ lack of understanding during Jesus ministry that is replaced by powerful witness after the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- (19-20) For now, Jesus explains that the grief they are about to experience will be temporary.
  - For a brief time, the world will rejoice at the event that causes them to mourn.
  - This event that will seem like painful tragedy turns into the greatest cause for joy.
- (21-22) Jesus uses the illustration of a woman giving birth.
  - Labor is intensely painful, but what mother doesn’t forget about the pain the moment she is holding her new baby.
  - The disciples will have grief as their beloved Lord is taken away by the most final & inevitable thing from a human point of view (death, and a horrifying death at that).
  - Then will come the joy of seeing him again because he has paid the penalty for sin and destroyed death from the inside.
    - It will be a joy that nothing in this world can take away because sin & death have lost their power for those who are in Christ.
    - Our eternal future is secure.
      - “Who can stand against us?” (Romans 8:31) – no one greater than God who is for us!
      - “What can mere mortals do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6) – nothing that matters.

- 1 Peter 1:3-6 – Praise to God and encouragement to believers – I wonder if the Holy Spirit didn't bring this very conversation to mind.

## (23-28) Prayer in Jesus' Name

- (23-24) Praying directly to the Father in Jesus' name (as if he were making the request) provides what we need to carry out his will & fully experience the joy he gives.
  - Illustration: ambassadors requesting what they need to fulfill their mission.
  - This isn't a magical token that turns God into the cosmic vending machine.
    - We are making our requests in Jesus' name, and if we request something that he would not want (i.e. against God's will) the answer can be "no."
    - As we talked about a few weeks ago, our prayers should include asking for things that help us do the will of God (wisdom, love, peace, opportunities...).
- (25-28) The way is open to a direct relationship with God the Father who loves us.
  - The story of salvation is not that nice God the Son came to rescue us from the wrath of mean God the Father who he forced into forgiving and tolerating us.
  - God the Father loves us so much that he sent God the Son who willingly came to do his Father's will and save us from our sins and restore our relationship with him and then sent God the Holy Spirit to indwell us until he returns.
  - If you trust in Jesus to save you, God is your Father; the perfect, Almighty God of the universe loves you and wants to hear from you.
    - Prayer is not constantly playing telephone where we talk to Jesus the Son who passes on our message to the Father.
    - Jesus is our mediator in that through his death and resurrection he has opened the way for restored relationship & direct communication.
    - Prayer is talking directly to God our Father because he loves us just as he loves his only begotten Son Jesus Christ (see 17:23).
    - And of course we can address Jesus & the Holy Spirit in our prayers too (Pastor Ben spoke on that a while ago– *Prayer & the Trinity 3/17/24*).
    - And we don't need to worry about "getting the words just right"
      - You're talking to your Dad, not filing a legal brief.
      - Even when we don't really know what to say, the indwelling Holy Spirit understands & expresses what we can't (Romans 8:26-27).

## (29-33) The Father's Sovereignty

- (29-30) At this point the disciples express both faith and overconfidence.
  - Their expression of faith in who Jesus is is a very good thing.
    - This is not the first time they have expressed faith in Jesus.
    - They believe that they now have a better understanding of who he is
    - This increase in understanding and awe is something that happens throughout the Christian life if we are making an effort to grow spiritually.

- Unfortunately, they also seem to think that they have now arrived at perfect understanding.
  - ...even though Jesus has just told them that the Holy Spirit will give them fuller understanding when he comes.
  - Be careful if you find yourself becoming so content with your level of spiritual maturity that you stop trying to learn more and/or become more Christlike in your behavior (Proverbs 16:18).
- (31-33) Jesus provides a reality check and one final piece of encouragement
  - (31-32a) He points out that for all their “we have it together spiritually” attitude they are about to abandon him as soon as things get dangerous; they are going to fall hard.
  - (32b-33) Thankfully, the successful accomplishment of God’s plan does not depend on them (or on us).
    - God the Father and God the Son work together to provide salvation.
    - Satan and his world system have lost, and Jesus Christ is victorious.
    - Jesus has broken the power of sin and death, and glorious eternity is secure for those who are in him.
    - Because of this, we can have peace in any situation – calm assurance that God is in control and absolute trust that he will do what is best.

## **Conclusion: 4 comforts when we face hatred, or opposition**

- The Ministry of the Holy Spirit
  - If you are under conviction about your need for salvation, trust Jesus today.
  - Be a faithful witness, leaving the results up to him.
  - Spend time in God’s Word – he can’t help you understand it for comfort and guidance if you aren’t filling your mind with it.
- The joy of the resurrection
  - Remember your glorious future.
  - Ask yourself, “What can mere mortals do to me?” – the answer is “nothing that matters in the long run because my Lord has defeated sin and death.”
- Prayer in Jesus’ name
  - Talk to your loving Father about whatever is troubling you.
  - Ask him for things that you need to live faithfully, know that he is willing and able to give you those things.
- The Father’s sovereignty
  - Remember, it’s not up to you to make everything turn out right.
  - At the will of the Father, our Lord and Savior has overcome the world. Be at peace!