



I Will Not Leave You

Message Notes, September 4, 2016

John 14:15-31, 16:5-16

These weeks, we have been with Jesus and his disciples in the “upper room” – they have gathered for the special Passover Meal. Jesus knows these are his last hours with them and his heart is filled with loving affection and care for them. He is thoughtfully and tenderly sharing with them his last words before his death. He has washed their feet; he has revealed that he knows one will betray him and one will deny him; he is trying to explain to them that he must “lay down his life,” and now (in the above verses) he is trying to assure them, “I will not leave you as orphans.”

We must try to imagine the uncertainty the disciples are feeling this night. They have walked with Jesus for three years now. They love him! They have also come to (wrongly) believe that he is going to redeem the Hebrews from Roman oppression and restore Israel to national prominence. It is slowly dawning that Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world, and it is characterized by humility, servanthood, and even suffering. They are confused at best, and fearful at worst. Jesus longs to reassure them:

“I will ask the Father, and He will send you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.”

“I will not leave you as orphans – I will come to you.” (John 14:15-18)

“I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I am going away ... if I go, I will send the Counselor to you” (John 16:7).

“Another Counselor”

“Another” – not a different one, but another one like Jesus. Really he is Jesus, for they are one.

“Counselor” – The greek word “paraclete” is so rich: It literally means “one who comes alongside.”

The Holy Spirit is: counselor, comforter, strengthener. Jesus dwelling right there inside us.

The Holy Spirit brings:

1. The PRESENCE of Jesus.

This is the essence of our spiritual life – that Jesus has come near, is near. He knows us, and he wants us to know him. His love is intimate. He is ever-present. The Holy Spirit, who indwells our spirits, makes this so.

Moses knew the desperate longing for the presence of God. God told him he would drive out all enemies and deliver the rich Promised Land to the Hebrew people, but He would not go with them. Moses’ adamant response – “If your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.” (Exodus 33:15) Paraphrased – “If you don’t go with us; we ain’t taking one step!”

David, too, knew the deep life of the presence of the Lord. After his huge moral failure with Bathsheba (adultery and murder of her husband to cover this up), David is confronted by the prophet Nathan. His response is not one of rationalizing his sin, or asking God to minimize its tangible consequences. David’s heart cry is, “Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11-12).

2. The PURITY of Jesus.

Our salvation is much more than simply ensuring we get into heaven after we survive this world. God’s passionate purpose is to transform our lives from the inside out. He longs to cultivate in us the very character of Jesus; to make us more and more like Him. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. (See Galatians 5:22-25) Our “Paraclete’s” first name is “Holy” (Spirit) – He wants to grow in us His fruit, His holiness!



Throughout these “upper room” verses, Jesus is weaving a cord of three strands: love, obedience, and intimacy with him/the Holy Spirit. Obedience is not the means of our salvation; it is not how we earn God’s love (for His love and grace are freely given). Obedience is a fruit of God’s love at work in us; an evidence of our grateful love for Him.

3. The POWER of Jesus.

Holy Spirit makes all the resources and power of heaven available to us (by faith).

“All that belongs to the father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you” (John 16:15).

“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12).

Holy Spirit is receiving from Jesus all that he has received from the Father, and he is then making it “known” and available to us in whom he dwells. We who love and follow Jesus by faith, will do “even greater things” than Jesus. Not qualitatively greater, but quantitatively greater.

When Jesus “became flesh and dwelt among us,” he was limited in time and place by his human body, but now that He has ascended back to heaven and sent His Spirit to indwell all his followers, His impact in the world is hugely multiplied because we, his people, are everywhere! We have “greater” influence in the world.

In the last 100 years, the church has experienced a sad “divide:” One camp of Christians has tended to emphasize Power (over Purity); the other has focused on Purity (ignoring the Power of the Holy Spirit). This is an unhealthy dichotomy! The Holy Spirit should never be “parceled up.” He is One, and all the dimensions of His nature are essential for every believer: Presence, Purity and Power. May we refuse to enter into this debate. May we be a people who long for all the fullness of the Spirit in our lives.

One last thought – Jesus said “I will not leave you as orphans – I will come to you” (by my Spirit). But are we living like orphans? Are we ignoring/neglecting our vital connection with Jesus through His Holy Spirit that indwells us? Are we open to and seeking the voice and stirring of the Spirit in our lives? Are we missing His Presence, Purity and Power?

How do we stay surrendered to Holy Spirit so He can transform us into the character of Jesus and empower us with the power of Jesus (to be salt and light in our world)?

- It begins with “death to self.” We commit our hearts to follow Jesus and live for Him and not ourselves.
- We must be intentional about staying connected to Him (“abiding in Him”).
- We must stay hungry for the things of God, for the depth of His grace, for the fullness of His life.
- We must live out the words of Jeremiah 29:13-14 – “when you seek me with your whole heart.”

What would happen if we were as hungry for God’s presence (purity and power) as Moses and David were?

Reflection Questions

1. Purity and Power – do you tend to pursue one over the other? If so, how might you pursue a healthier balance?
2. Are you hungry for the fullness of the Spirit in your life? How do we “get hungry” for Him?