



Jesus, the Comforter

Lesson 23 John 16:1-33

REVIEW

1. In our last lesson, we studied the fellowship that the disciples were to have with Christ in the eighth and final "I Am" statement of John when Jesus said, "*I am the vine, ye are the branches*". We learned that the disciples' fruitfulness for God was directly related to their abiding in the vine.
2. Jesus also restated His new commandment to the disciples, "*Love one another,*" in order to teach them about the fellowship they should enjoy with one another.
3. We also learned about the fellowship the disciples would have with the Holy Spirit in the midst of a world that hated them. He would be their Comforter.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. In this lesson, we will see Jesus as the Comforter. He comforted them with the truth about coming persecution.
2. He also comforted them with the truth about the coming presence of the Holy Spirit and His ministry in the world as it relates to His ministry of the Word.
3. He comforted them by giving them the truth of certain peace in the midst of uncertain, troubled times.

TRUTH ABOUT COMING PERSECUTION (16:1-4)

16:1 "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. **2** They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. **3** And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. **4** But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you."

A. Specific persecutions - 16:2-3

1. Excommunication from the synagogue
 - a. The persecution of the church came from the Jewish leaders - **Acts 7:1-60, 8:1, 9:1-2, 26:11**
 - b. "*Put you out*" means "they will make you outcasts from the synagogues."¹
2. Martyrdom
3. Reasons for these persecutions
 - a. Those who would kill the disciples would do so thinking they were faithfully serving God
 - b. They do so because they do not know the Father or Jesus - **16:3, 15:21; Romans 10:1-3**

B. The reasons why Jesus revealed the coming persecution - 16:1, 4

1. "*That [the disciples] should not be offended*"
 - a. "*Offended*" means "to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey"²

¹ A.T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament*, Vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), 265.

- b. Same word as used in John 6:61 when Jesus asked if His teaching about the bread of life offended those who heard it. The word there indicates an offense caused by Christ.
 - c. Jesus told His disciples the truth about persecution so they would not be offended at Him. In other words, He told them about the persecution so they would believe Him and trust Him because His word was true.
2. The disciples would remember His words when these persecutions came - **16:4**
- a. We see the certainty of these persecutions in the phrase *“that when the time shall come”*
 - b. Jesus did not fully disclose the persecution earlier because He was with them
 - c. The nature of the persecution would be magnified in the days to follow
- C. The comfort of His revelation is seen in that when the persecution came, the disciples knew that Jesus had been truthful with them and remembered His words to them

TRUTH ABOUT THE COMING PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (16:5-15)

A. The sorrow of the disciples - 16:5-6

16:5 “But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? **6** But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.”

- 1. Jesus reminded them that He was about to die, but none of the disciples were asking, “Where are you going?”
- 2. The disciples attention had shifted - **16:5b-6, 13:36, 37, 14:5, 8, 22**
- 3. Their attention was on their sorrow - **16:6**

B. The promise of the Holy Spirit - 16:7

16:7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

- 1. *“Nevertheless I tell you the truth”*. Regardless of the disciples’ focus (their sorrow) or desire to know, Jesus explains the truth of His departure to them.
- 2. Christ’s departure was *“expedient”* for the disciples, meaning “it is profitable”³
- 3. The expedience of His departure was the coming presence of the Holy Spirit, *“If I depart, I will send him unto you”*
- 4. How would Christ’s departure benefit the disciples? The context reveals the answer.
 - a. His departure (death) would bring forth the fruit of eternal life - **12:24**
 - b. Dwelling places in heaven would be prepared - **14:1-4**
 - c. Their resurrection would be secure through His - **14:19**
 - d. Access to the Father would be possible - **14:6**
 - e. The Spirit would come to them - **16:7**
 - f. His departure would usher in the special ministry of the Holy Spirit

² Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 576, ref. 4624.

³ W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1968), 218.

i. His ministry in the world - 16:8-11

16:8 “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: **9** Of sin, because they believe not on me; **10** Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; **11** Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

a) His ministry is to reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.
“Reprove” means “to expose and convict”⁴ - 16:8

b) “Of sin, because they believe not on me” - 16:9

1) “Sin” means “to be mistaken, to err”⁵

2) General sin is any violation of God’s law, but a specific sin for which the Holy Spirit would convict (and does convict) the world is mentioned here, which is the rejection of the Lord Jesus

c) “Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more” - 16:10

1) “Righteousness”, “when affirmed of Christ, denotes his perfect moral purity, integrity and sinlessness.”⁶

2) The Holy Spirit would convict the world of the righteousness of Christ because Christ would be leaving the earth, “I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” How could the world know the truth about Jesus Christ after He was gone?

3) The Holy Spirit would convict (and does convict) the world of righteousness by teaching the world of the absolute perfection and righteousness of Jesus Christ after He was gone. The world’s rejection of Christ (sin) is a result of not acknowledging their sinfulness in light of Christ’s perfection.

d) “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” - 16:11

1) “Judgment” speaks of “a decision; by extension a tribunal; implies accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment”⁷

2) The Holy Spirit would convict (and does convict) the world of judgment by revealing the truth about Satan’s judgment - 12:30-32

ii. His ministry of the Word - 16:12-15

16:12 “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. **13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. **14** He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. **15** All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

a) Jesus had more to say to the apostles that they would not bear (grasp) at that time - 16:12

b) However, when the Spirit of God would come, He would “guide [them] into all truth” - 16:13

⁴ Ibid., 527.

⁵ Thayer, 30, ref. 266.

⁶ Ibid., 149, ref. 1343.

⁷ James Strong, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), 43, reference 2920.

- 1) This does not mean that the Holy Spirit supernaturally inspires believers in every age
- 2) This was a special ministry of the Spirit (divine inspiration) to a specific group of people (apostles)
- c) The Triune God's supernatural revelation of the Word
 - 1) The Spirit would not speak of Himself, rather the things that He heard - 16:12
 - 2) The Spirit would show the disciples things to come, which was the prophetic nature of their ministry
 - 3) The Spirit would glorify Jesus Christ in His ministry
 - (i) What He would reveal to the disciples would come from Jesus, *"For he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you"* - 16:14
 - (ii) A reference to what Jesus wanted to reveal to the disciples, but couldn't - 16:12
 - 4) What Jesus would reveal to the Spirit belonged to the Father - 16:15
 - 5) Therefore, what the Spirit would reveal to the apostles was from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

TRUTH ABOUT CERTAIN PEACE IN A WORLD OF UNCERTAINTY (16:16-33)

A. Jesus proclaims the Gospel - 16:16

16:16 "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."

1. His death, *"A little while, and ye shall not see me"*
2. His burial, *"And again, a little while,"* three days would pass
3. His resurrection, *"Ye shall see me"*
4. His ascension, *"Because I go to the Father"*

B. The disciples' confusion - 16:17-18

16:17 "Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? **18** They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith."

C. Jesus explains the effects of the Gospel - 16:19-28

1. His death and burial - 16:19-22

16:19 "Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? **20** Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. **21** A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. **22** And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

- a. The disciples would *"weep and lament...and...be sorrowful"* - 16:20
- b. The world *"shall rejoice"*
- c. Compared to *"a woman when she is in travail"* - 16:21

2. His resurrection, *"But I will see you again"* - 16:22

D. The blessings of the Gospel

1. Would turn the disciples' sorrow into joy - 16:20
2. Compared to the joy of delivering a child, *"She remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world"* - 16:21b
3. Would cause rejoicing in the apostles' hearts - 16:22
4. Would produce a lasting joy in them, *"And your joy no man taketh from you"* - 16:22b
5. Would give them access to God the Father through His name - 16:23-28

16:23 "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. **24** Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. **25** These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. **26** At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: **27** For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. **28** I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."

- a. *"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing"*. During His earthly ministry, Jesus was the one to whom the disciples went for help. - 16:23
- b. Their requests would now be made to the Father in Jesus' name - 16:23b
- c. Their fullness of joy was related to their asking in Jesus' name - 16:24, 15:11
- d. Jesus would be their Mediator - 16:25-28; 1 Timothy 2:1-8

E. The disciples' understanding - 16:29-30

16:29 "His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. **30** Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

1. They understood what Jesus was saying in verse 16 by His plain declaration in verse 28, *"I leave the world, and go to the Father"* - 16:29
2. They were *"sure"* that Jesus knew all things. The word *"sure"* means to "see or perceive"⁸
3. They understood that Jesus knew their hearts - 16:30; 16:19
4. They understood that Jesus came from God

F. Jesus challenged their understanding - 16:31-33

1. *"Do ye now believe?"* - 16:31

16:31 "Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?"

- a. The word *"believe"* means "to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, place confidence in"⁹
- b. Jesus is challenging the depth of their faith and understanding

⁸ Strong, 25, ref. 1492.

⁹ Thayer, 511, ref. 4100.

2. "You will be scattered" - 16:32

16:32 "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

a. "You will go to your own home"

b. "You will leave me alone" (though He was not alone because of His relationship with the Father)

3. "You will have tribulation" - 16:33

16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

4. "You can have peace"

LIFE LESSONS

1. He's worth it. If we are persecuted, Jesus is worth it.
2. He's with you. In the midst of persecution, He's with you.
3. Rejoice. The ministry of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled in the completion of the Word. His ministry continues in the world as He convicts the world according to His Word. Rejoice that you were convinced of your sin and the judgment of God and are clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
4. Have peace. Know that no temptation is too great for you. Know that no persecution can separate you from God. Allow Christ's peace to live in you.
5. Be comforted by the truthfulness of God.