

The Word Became Flesh
Week 43
John 14:27-31
"I'm Going Home"

Introduction

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. **Hebrew 1:1-3**

Have you ever wanted something so desperately that you earnestly prayed for it over and over again, only to have things not turn out the way that you had hoped? If so, did you feel let down and discouraged as a result? If you have spent much time living here on planet earth, the answer to both of these questions is yes. Ofttimes we have a picture in our worldly minds of how things are "supposed" to work out, and we take it pretty hard when they do not go as we thought they should. It's called life. And to be honest with you, I never thought in a million years that I would ever use a quote from the Rolling Stones in a sermon outline, but here goes: "You can't always get what you want, but you know sometimes, you get what you need."

Many of us have stories to tell of life's struggles and disappointments, where things did not go as we had planned. But the one thing that I have learned from trusting in Christ is that the things that I plan for myself are nothing compared to what God wants for me!

We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. **Romans 8:28**

So, if we are being honest today, we would all have to admit that in the end God's plans are much better than anything that we could ever hope for. We just have a hard time seeing what is best for us. Thankfully, God always knows what He is doing. And if you are Believer, take comfort in knowing that God knows what you need far better than you.

For I know the plans I have for you" —this is the Lord's declaration— "plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. **Jeremiah 29:11**

Sandi and I experienced this particular reality when we moved to Guatemala in the hopes of adopting two orphan children several years ago. We knew that this was something God had led us to do. There was no doubt in our minds. So we began the exhaustive and expensive process of trying to make the adoption happen. After about seven years of trying, we finally came to realize that those two boys, that we love so much, would never be able to return to the States with us. We were devastated, not to mention how let down those kids were when we had to explain to them that we had to return home without them. If I can get real honest with you, I will tell you, that day was the worst day of my life. I was angry, confused, and to be honest, it shook my faith to the very core.

But there is a "rest of the story", as Paul Harvey used to say. Some years later, we returned to Guatemala on a mission trip and were able to reconnect with those children (They are all grown up now). And they still consider us as their parents. Not only that, but I was able to help with the youngest son's wedding, and I now have a grandson in Guatemala that is named after me! So you see, even though the government would not allow us to adopt these kids, God made them ours anyway! And not only have they been added to our family, but during that time of trial, a dear friend of ours named Mike Parker

traveled to Guatemala to visit with us. As result of that visit, he felt God's calling for Him to start up a mission in that country.

Now, Clubhouse ministries has reached thousands of children as they are building Christian schools and planting churches. Our church has partnered with this ministry in order to reach the lost in Guatemala. Thousands of lives have been changed. Thanks to God's wondrous plan that all started with a "failed adoption". God is good. And His plans are so much greater than our own. Many times, we must simply wait and see what He has in store!

Just imagine how disappointed the disciples were on the night that Jesus told them He would soon be leaving them behind. He promised to send them another "Comforter", but they didn't really comprehend anything that He was saying. All they could perceive for certain on that night was that their beloved Master was leaving. They had thought for sure that Jesus would rescue their tiny nation from Rome. But here He was telling them He was about to die. He tried to get them to understand that everything that was going to happen would be for their good. But how could anything good come from an execution? *Answer: God's plan is always best.*

Just before they left the upper room to walk to the Mount of Olives, Jesus gave them one final promise of peace. And what He promised them that night would soon become a reality they would all be able to understand. Everything was working out for their benefit, according to God's plan. But they just couldn't see through the heartache and disappointment of the moment at hand. So let us look to the words of Christ on the eve of His day of destiny. They give us a glimpse into the perfect heart of our Savior. We see *His Serenity, His Submission, and His Steadfast Devotion* to His Father. Jesus demonstrates for us how love and obedience go hand in hand.

His Serenity (vs. 27)

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful." **John 14:27**

They were struggling with the inner turmoil that was doing its level best to consume them. But Jesus promised them peace. The Greek word for "piece" is *eirene* (Pronounced i-ray-nay). It is a word from which we derive the English serene or serenity. This peace that Christ was offering to them was to come from Him personally. Just read the text *"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you."* It is the divine peace that The Holy Spirit offers to every Believer, and it is the very antithesis of worry.

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present you requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Are you tormented by worry, fear, and doubt today? Give it to Jesus and let Him give you His peace in return. The Spirit is able to comfort you as no other can. This is why He is called The Comforter. He brings peace to the midst of the storm.

I am reminded here of Jesus being sound asleep on a boat with His disciples (**Matthew 8:23-27**). When a furious storm broke upon the waters of the sea, the disciples were convinced that they were all about to die. And they were shocked that Jesus could rest in the midst of such turmoil. They woke Him up and accused Him of not caring that about their impending doom. His response? A single phrase. **"Peace, be still."** And the winds and waves became calm. Jesus spoke "peace" to the storm, and it was all over. This is the same Jesus that lives within the heart of every believer today. And He can bring peace to your storm as well. In the midst of all manner of trial, we would be wise to meditate on this verse of Scripture:

He says, "Be still, and know that I AM God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." **Psalms 46:10 (NIV)**

I love how Jesus goes on to distinguish the difference between “His kind of peace” and that of the world. Have you ever had someone attempt to comfort you in your time of need and fail miserably in the process? We say the dumbest things to people sometimes. We use catch phrases like, “I know just how you feel.” Or worse, “This is nothing compared to some of the stuff that I have gone through!” Just this last week, I was compelled to go to the emergency room with what I considered to be an unbearable pain in my shoulder. The staff at the hospital gave me strong meds to ease the pain and also to calm my stress level. As far as I was concerned it was a pretty rough night!

After learning of my predicament, several people called and tried to “encourage” me. Some were very helpful and caring. Others, however, felt the need tell me about how they had experienced far greater medical emergencies. Might I share with you a few words of wisdom today? Here goes: When someone is suffering, it is NEVER a good idea to tell them how much more trying difficulties that you have personally endured. You may very well have faced much greater hardships than they, but telling them how bad you have suffered does not serve to ease someone else’s pain even a little bit. In fact, can I get a witness? Its ANNOYING! When I am hurting, I would simply prefer the pain to go away, as opposed to hearing that I am such a weakling compared to your great suffering. If that is the best that you have to offer someone, it would probably be best if you not speak at all.

Christ doesn’t offer the same kind of peace that the world gives. The world doesn’t even comprehend the peace of Christ. But if you are in Christ, and He in you, then you can know *His* peace. The world is a selfish place. It seeks for peace in pleasure, power, and prosperity. And any form of peace this world offers is woefully inadequate. But Christ Jesus is not of this world. And His peace will actually make a difference, so **Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7 NIV)**. This is how we can know the peace of God. Learn a lesson from the disciples. You need not be afraid of the storm, when Jesus is in your boat.

His Submission (vs. 28-29)

“You have heard Me tell you, ‘I am going away and I am coming to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens so that when it does happen you may believe.” **John 14:28-29**

The problem with the disciples that night was that they were only concerned regarding the things they believed were best for *them*. They wanted Jesus to deliver them from Roman oppression. They couldn’t see how Jesus’ death could bring about any of their aspirations. The problem wasn’t that His plan was flawed. It was their own thinking that was flawed. They wanted God to adjust to their plans, rather than the other way around. How many times have we, as Believers, fallen into the same trap? Thinking with our own fleshly minds, rather than submitting to the leadership of The Holy Spirit?

Jesus told His disciples that if they really loved Him, then they would want Him to do His Father’s will. He shows His own heart for obedience in this passage. He is prepared to submit to The Father in all things. He is willing to endure great suffering in order to carry out His Father’s wishes.

Many have taken Christ’s words in these verses out of context. They would claim that Jesus is saying here that He is lesser than The Father and not an equal member of the Godhead. This is, of course, a false assumption. Many times in this gospel, Christ has made the case that He is God, and if you had seen Him, you had seen The Father. They are One. But in this context, Jesus is speaking of obedient submission. He submitted Himself to The Father, because to do so, is to prove our love for Him. Remember what He told the disciples?

“If you love Me, you will keep My commands.”

John 14:15

His act of submission by going to the cross was proof that He loved His Father. This is the same type of loving obedience that He requires of us as well.

Also, if the disciples truly loved Christ, then they would have longed for Him to return to His Father and take up all of the glory that He had laid aside in order to condescend to us. Jesus belongs on The Throne of Heaven. The glory that is rightfully His was set aside so that He could become a penniless carpenter down here, who would offer up His life as the spotless Lamb of God.

The disciples should have longed to see Him high and lifted up. But they weren't thinking of what was best for Him. Rather, they were focused upon what they presumed to be the best plan for themselves. What they could not grasp at the time was that if we are in Christ, then what is best for Christ is best for us as well. The plans that God The Father had for His Son would benefit all who would place their faith in Him. Jesus died in order to **save us!** Again, God's plan is always best (**Jeremiah 29:11**). Show me someone who claims to be a Christian, yet does not understand the doctrine of submission, and I will show you someone, who does not know Christ. To know Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to live in obedient submission to His commands.

His Steadfastness (vs. 30-31)

"I will not talk with you much longer, because the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over Me. On the contrary, so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do as the Father commanded Me. Get up; let's leave this place."

John 14:30-31

As I mentioned earlier, Jesus once more made His case for "love = submission and obedience". He would submit to the Father to show the world that He loves The Father. Imagine all the things that the religious zealots of Jerusalem had said about Him. They accused Him of blasphemy against God, but Jesus **is** God. They accused Him of being a lawbreaker, and yet, He was willing to die to obey His Father. They accused Him of performing miracles by Satan's power, and yet, He was about to go and do the very thing that Satan had tried to tempt Him away from doing! Is it any wonder that Christ was in a hurry to suffer the cross and get back to His Father? His actions in the following hours and days would be proof of His steadfast loyalty to The Father. And The Father would vindicate Him at the resurrection! I am reminded here of King David's prayer in **Psalms 35**, when he was persecuted by his enemies.

"You saw it, LORD; do not be silent. LORD do not be far from me. Wake up and rise to my defense, to my cause, my God and my LORD! Vindicate me, LORD my God, in keeping with Your righteousness, and do not let them rejoice over me. Do not let them say in their hearts, 'Aha! Just what we wanted.' Do not let them say, 'We have swallowed him up!' Let those who rejoice at my misfortune be disgraced and humiliated; let those who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and reproach."

Psalms 35:22-26

Satan has no power over Christ. He had tempted Jesus in the wilderness in a futile endeavor to dissuade The LORD from obeying His Father's plan for Him. The devil had tried every thing he could conjure up in his most wicked imaginings to stop The Savior from submitting to The Father's plan. This very night in Gethsemane, the accuser would do everything that he could to somehow thwart God's plan for His one and only Son. But it would be to no avail. The Savior was steadfast in his love and obedience to The Father. The devil had stirred up the mob against Jesus, but all of it would only serve to fulfill The Father's plan.

I am reminded here of the story of Esther. The wicked Haman had constructed a great gallows upon which to execute Mordecai the Jew, but he ended up being hanged upon his own gallows by the king! Satan had incited the mob against The Chosen One, but in the end, it would be Satan himself who was ultimately destroyed by the cross of Christ! The devil has no power over The Savior. Nothing on earth, or under the earth, or in heaven can alter the will of Almighty God. We must take courage and strength from this truth. God is sovereign. And the steadfast devotion of the Christ to His Father can not be diminished.

This is the example of love and devotion that we are compelled to display in our lives as well. We love Christ, so we follow Christ. For Love = Obedience. Jesus died, because He was one with The Father, and when we place our faith in Him, we are baptized into Him, just as He is in The Father, and The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will be in us, as we are in them. This is the promised inheritance that we have in Christ Jesus!

The Father had a plan. *For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son.* The Son so loved the Father, that He lay down His life to obey His Father's will. He was steadfast in His love and obedience. If we love Him, we too will be obedient to His commands and His will. And when we do this, we have peace! Peace unlike anything this world can give. A peace that transcends all the storms of life and reminds us that we have nothing to fear when Christ is "in the ship" with us!

The LORD was in a hurry to see The Father's plan through to the end. He was the first to arise from the table that night to go out and meet His destiny head on. The book of *Matthew* tells us that before they departed the upper room that night, they closed out the Passover meal by singing a hymn together. We know from Jewish tradition exactly what they sang. It was ***Psalm 118***, the final song that is always sung at every Passover. I challenge you to read the words The LORD sang that evening as He prepared Himself to face the cross the very next day. To whet your appetite, I will share just a few verses from this beautiful song.

The Stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This came from The LORD; it is wondrous in our sight. This is the day that The LORD has made; let's rejoice and be glad in it. ***Psalm 118:22-24***

These are some of the lyrics that your Redeemer sang on the night before He went to the cross... for you! He looked to the cross with joy, for only by the way of the cross can we find our salvation. Oh, the steadfast and submissive love of our LORD Jesus Christ, Who died so that we could possess the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. He returned home to His Father in order to provide this wondrous fellowship by The Spirit now living within us. To know Him is to love Him. To love Him is to obey Him. And to obey Him is to have everlasting life, joy, and peace. Have you personally experienced this wondrous love that He offers? Place your trust in Him today, for His peace is the inheritance of all who believe.

And let the believer say... TRUTH!!!