

**The Word Became Flesh
(Week 50)
John 16:25-33
“Praying to The Father”**

Introduction

And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir. Galatians 4:6-7

Sometimes, in order to fully understand something, you have to recognize both what is and isn't there. Please allow me to explain. Anyone who has ever been married knows that sometimes it's not what your spouse is “saying” that matters, it is what he or she doesn't say that should make you pay careful attention. The same is true for all you single people, when someone is trying to set you up on a blind date. When they describe the person as being nice or charming but do not mention their appearance, or the fact that they just escaped from prison, then there is a truth to be gleaned from what is not being said!

As we come to the end of **John Chapter 16**, we see Jesus telling His disciples that they would all soon abandon Him. Now, on the surface, this sounds like a terrible thing. After all, these are the very same people that He had personally chosen to be His representatives here upon the earth, after He had returned to The Father.

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.” John 15:16

So let's put all this in perspective. If Jesus personally chose these guys, and they abandoned Him just when things got difficult, then wouldn't His ministry on earth have been a complete failure? After all, He was returning to His Father in just a few short days. His time on earth was essentially up, and now, those whom He had hand-picked to carry out His mission were abandoning Him! This sounds like a disaster to me. And yet, in His words to the disciples, there is not one single hint of despair or fear of failure. How can this be?

Answer: Because He isn't depending upon their strength, that's why. He knows that His mission cannot fail, because it is not to be carried out in human strength, but by the power of The Almighty Everlasting God. That is why He was not the least bit concerned that His followers would be deserting Him. He knew that He would personally be going out to round them back up again. And in the end, He would not lose a single one of those that He had chosen. For you see, when you belong to Christ, it is not you who keeps Him, but rather, it is He that keeps you!

On the night before He went to the cross, Jesus gave His disciples a final word that on the surface sounded ominous, but was actually intended to give them a source of peace.

“I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace....” John 16:33a

And in those words to His disciples, we find a truth that applies to every follower of Christ. When you love Him, He keeps you safe in His love. No one, or no thing, can separate you from the love that is in Christ Jesus (**Romans 8:37-39**). It is the security in Christ Jesus upon which every believer should rely when circumstances seem dark and discouraging. In Christ, you have been adopted by The Father, and because you have been adopted by Him, you are *Learning of The Father, Loved by The Father, and can Lean (depend) on The Father.*

Learning of The Father (vs. 25)

"I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. A time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.

John 16:25

During His earthly ministry Jesus taught in parables and often used cryptic sayings to convey spiritual truths. The trouble with this was if the hearer was not "spiritually minded", having been transformed by The Spirit of God, then these sayings, more often than not, would go completely over the heads of those who heard them. This was actually done for a purpose.

So He said, "The secrets of the kingdom of God have been given for you to know, but to the rest it is in parables, so that Looking they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. (Is. 6:9)"

Luke 8:10

Jesus would often call His disciples aside and explain to them the meaning of His illustrations, but even with the explanation, they were not quite sure of what He was telling them. He had even explained to them plainly that He would be crucified and raised on the third day, and even then, they weren't able to understand what He was saying.

For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill Him, and after He is killed, He will rise three days later." But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him."

Mark 9:31-32

This is the reason that Jesus told His disciples that a time would come when He would teach them *plainly* about the things of The Father (**16:15**). When they were filled with The Spirit, they would be given the ability to understand spiritual truths, as they had never understood them before. Then they would be able not only to comprehend all that Jesus had taught them, but they would also be ready to learn the many things that He still had yet to teach them. In short, those who have The Spirit will be able to grasp the true meaning of Scripture. And being able to discern The Scriptures helps us to come to know God on a more intimate level. For God reveals His very nature to us in His Word.

To comprehend The Word of God is to come to know The God of The Word. Jesus died for this purpose, so that we are able to come to know The Father through The Son. And the only way in which this can happen is to believe in The Son, so we can be taught by The Spirit. This is God's perfect plan to bring His children close to Himself, so that one day all who believe will come to know Him in an intimate and perfect way. When Christ comes to bring His kingdom, those who are in it will come to a full knowledge of The Father and shall be at peace with Him and with one another.

They will not harm or destroy each other on My entire holy mountain, for the land will be as full of the knowledge of The LORD as the sea is filled with water. Isaiah 11:9

This is the promise and hope of everyone who has been born of The Spirit of The Living God. That we shall come to know Him intimately. This is the reason that Christ came and died for all who would long to know The One Who gave them life.

"...but I will tell you plainly about the Father..."

John 16:25b

Loved by the Father (vs. 26-28)

"On that day you will ask in My name, and I am not telling you that I will ask the Father on your behalf. For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

John 16:26-28

Once again the statement “*On that day*” is a reference to the coming of The Holy Spirit. And when He did come to indwell every Believer, our ability to pray was revolutionized. In the past, those who wanted to pray to The Father had to be represented by a priest, who would go into the Tabernacle and offer up incense on the altar in front of the Holy of Holies. No one except that High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and that was only once a year on The Day of Atonement. And even he could not enter there unless he brought with him the blood of the sacrifice. But here is the good news. Thanks to Jesus’ death on the cross, His blood has forever paid for the guilt of God’s people. So that we can be accepted by the Father at any time.

As I have mentioned before in this study, this truth is perfectly illustrated in the book of *Esther*. The queen was allowed to approach the throne with her request, simply because she was the beloved bride of the king. To approach the king’s throne in those days without being summoned by him would have brought death upon Esther, but she was able to approach nonetheless, because of His great love for her (***Esther Chapters 4-5***). In much the same way, those who love Christ shall be loved by The Father and are able to boldly approach His throne with confidence at any time and receive His mercy (***Hebrews 4:6***).

The Father loves us, because we love The Son. And it is through the finished work of The Son that we are able to enter the Holy of Holies, for His atoning death has rent the veil of separation from top to bottom, giving us access to The Father through The Son.

But Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit. Suddenly, the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth quaked and the rocks were split. Matthew 27:50-51

Now, hear the significance of this as explained in Hebrews.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus — He has inaugurated for us a new and living way through THE CURTAIN (the is, through His flesh) — and since we have a great High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since He Who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:19-23 (emphasis added)

So now, thanks to Christ, we pray directly to The Father, for it is Christ Who opened up the way for us to do so! Christ is the “torn veil” that has opened up the Holy of Holies for us! And THIS, my friends, is what it means to pray in Jesus Name. For it is Jesus Who is “The Way” that we now can speak directly to The Father at any time. So, we would not dare ask of The Father for any request that would not be according to the will of The Son. We pray to our heavenly Father in accordance with The Son’s will.

As a pastor, I often get to hear Christians pray. And many times, I will hear them begin their prayer by saying, “Heavenly Father”, and then continue on with their prayer request. This is precisely what we have been commanded to do in Scripture. However, many times I hear them say at the end “In *Your* Name we pray.” In the most technical since this is incorrect, for if a prayer addressed to the Father is closed out by saying “in *Your* Name we pray”, then we are misunderstanding exactly *how* we are able to address The Father in the first place. If we are to be correct in our theology, we should be closing our prayers in “Jesus Name”, for it is He that has enabled us to speak *to* The Father. He is *The Way*.

Jesus died so that we can enter into the Holy of Holies through Him. So our prayers should, in reality, begin by addressing the Father and conclude with “In Jesus’ Name”. Now, I’m not trying to be legalistic here, but I am just trying to explain how the system actually works. Thanks to The Son, we now have access to address The Father. Because we love The Son, we shall forever remain in The Father’s love. Jesus does not have to ask The Father to do anything on our behalf, but rather, thanks to Christ, we now have direct access to ask on our own behalf. Now listen to Jesus’ words again in this context.

“On that day you will ask in My name, and I am not telling you that I will ask the Father on your behalf. For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from God.” **John 16:26-27**

Leaning on The Father (vs. 29-33)

His disciples said, “Look, now you’re speaking plainly and not using any figurative language. Now we know that you know everything and don’t need anyone to question you. By this we believe that you came from God.”

Jesus responded to them, “Do you now believe? Indeed, an hour is coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.” **John 16:29-33**

At this point, the disciples thought that they fully understood what He was telling them. They were mistaken, of course, and even as they professed their undying faith, He knew that the very next day, they would each run away to their respective homes to hide. For you see, in our own strength, we can accomplish nothing. We may think we are strong, but Christ knows us better than we know ourselves.

The thing that is most striking to me about this passage, as I stated earlier, is The LORD’S seeming lack of concern that His followers would abandon Him. He wasn’t worried about it in the least, for He knew that they loved Him, and even though they most certainly would abandon Him, it was He Himself Who would be returning to gather them back up again. As a follower of Christ who messes things up a lot, this gives me great comfort. Knowing that as ridiculously undependable as I can be sometimes, I can have peace in knowing that Jesus will never quit on me. This is what it means to lean on Him, rather than on my own strength.

Trust in The LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight. **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Jesus wasn’t concerned in regards to the scattering of the disciples, for He knew that His Father would see Him through to the very end. The will of The Father shall always be accomplished. Every believer also has this very same promise in Christ.

“...He will never leave you or abandon you.” **Deuteronomy 31:6b**

Though everyone else may abandon us, God will not forsake His own. This is why Jesus told His disciples that in Him they would always have peace (**vs. 33**). The reason that we too can have this very same peace is because we are His, and He will keep us. The disciples thought they had everything figured out. They didn’t. They thought they would faithfully follow Jesus to the very end. They wouldn’t. But they belonged to Christ, and therefore, their standing in Him was fully guaranteed, even when they stumbled and fell. Thanks be to God, that He holds onto us and not the other way around! We can fully lean upon Him for the outcome. In this world we will certainly have troubles and trials. Sometimes they will come at the hands of others, and at other times, they come because we are our own worst enemy! Can I get a witness?

But take heart, my brothers and sisters, we shall overcome, because we are in Christ, and He has already overcome! The outcome is therefore guaranteed. Those who love Christ shall *Learn of The Father, are Loved by The Father, and can Lean on The Father*. Even if you do not always understand what God is doing, know that He is doing it for your good. Because if you love the Son, then The Father loves you, and He will keep safe all those that He loves. Just as Noah was sealed by God Himself into the ark, we have been sealed by The Spirit into Christ Jesus, and nothing can cause us harm. I’m sure there were some difficult times for Noah and his family as they travailed upon the stormy seas cooped up with all those smelly animals. But through it all, their safe passage was guaranteed. And so it is with all who are in Christ.

And let those who are forever secure in Christ Jesus say... TRUTH!!!