The Upper Room Discourse
30 Definitions of a Disciple

Pine Cove Summer Staff Bible Study
2008
Dear Summer Staff:

Here are the notes to the 2008 summer staff Bible study on the Upper Room Discourse. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting with you all each week – even if only for a short time – as we discovered Jesus’ expectations of his own disciples after his departure. I hope that in looking at those expectations you have garnered a deeper realization of the cost of discipleship, and, as a result, a more simple desire to obey our Lord so that all the world may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and, in believing, have life in His name.

Please remember the one condition in my agreeing to teach this stuff to you guys: that you will not hoard it to yourself. Please teach this in your small groups, Sunday school classes, etc whatever. This material is not copyrighted and you can reproduce it as much as you want and you don’t even need to make a citation. I’ve invested a lot of time into preparing these studies and even more in teaching them to you. I now entrust that labor to you and expect that you will invest this in lives of people that are near and dear to you.

If you have questions about the study itself or need help in teaching it, I’m more than happy to help you. Once the Forge gets started in the fall, I may not be able to respond as quickly as I would like to, but I promise that I will get to it eventually. And if you think about it, let me know how it goes!

If you’d like to download the podcasts, visit the staff website at http://www.pinecove.com/summerjobs/staff/podcast_2008.cfm

I’ll look forward to next summer when we’ll get to do this all over again. In the meantime, don’t forget about the opportunity you have at the Forge as well. If you are interested in applying, please don’t hesitate to call/write with any questions you may have.

Grace and peace be with you,

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How To Use This Study:

- **Step 1**: Familiarize yourself with the passage. These notes assume that you are already familiar with the text, so don’t start using it until you’ve read through the passage a couple times.

- **Step 2**: Decide which parts of the passage are the ones you want to focus on. With most studies you don’t have time to go into all the detail you would like to. Instead, you have to pick the most important points and emphasize those.

- **Step 3**: Consult these notes and highlight/underline the sections that you want to make sure you include with your own thoughts. You may want to even listen to the podcasts of the original lessons themselves to help you get an idea of how the lesson has been taught before.

- **Step 4**: Have a general outline of thoughts that will help you string all the ideas together – including your own personal illustrations and activities.

- **Step 5**: Make sure you have something for them to obey as a result of your teaching. The tough questions aren’t essential – but since obedience is such a big theme in this discourse, you need to have them practice the discipline of simple obedience.

**Remember**: These notes are **mine**. You have to make them yours. You’ve been in classes where the teacher was reading something just because they had to, right? Until this information becomes something you are passionate about and familiar with it isn’t yours. Change this up as much as you want – add more quotes/references. **Make it your own**. The most inspiring and effective teachers are those who own what they teach.

**Tough Questions:**

It’s hard to replace the value of a good question to keep your students learning even after they leave your study. Each week there will be a question or two at the end of the study that is designed to make your students think hard about the subject just discussed. Sometimes the questions aren’t even answerable – but that’s not the point. The point is that they are engaging the Word on their own (and they’re motivated to do so!).

Attached to this study are my thoughts on each question. I only include them to help you, the teacher, answer the question yourself. I actually won’t even give an answer to the question unless the students have spent time answering it for themselves. I don’t want to foster a culture of spoon-feeding them answers. I want them to own what they learn so they can reproduce it in the lives of people they lead.

**Practice Obedience this Week:**

One of the greatest errors a Christian can commit is to mistake understanding for obedience. We must be careful not to think that just because we know what we ought to do means that we no longer ought to do it. It sounds silly, but it’s a sad reality. We spend countless hours wanting to know what our Rabbi knows so we can get an A on the test – but rarely does even half of what we learn make its way in our day-to-day existence.

For this reason, each week there will be something that your students should obey. No longer will we passively wait to obey Jesus, we will intentionally apply His Word as we are motivated by the Holy Spirit.

The spirit of this application should be simple. It can be obeyed in the broadest of contexts, but the point is that you want to see your students intentionally doing what Jesus told them to do.

Have your students share how they obeyed Jesus each week and watch and see what happens as your group “spurs one another on towards love and good deeds.” It will be a whole other kind of accountability group like you’ve never experienced before. 😊
Primary Sources:
To my knowledge, there aren’t any books written specifically on the Upper Room Discourse. I wish there were some, but they are mostly commentaries. Although I cite a number of different people, these are the sources I found to be the most helpful in composing my study. So, to the degree you find this study helpful, you need to know it really comes from the wisdom of these brothers in Christ. I’m just the young guy standing on their shoulders.

  - Morris’ commentary is regarded as one of the staples on John’s Gospel and the NICNT is one of the most popular commentary series in evangelical circles.

  - Dr. Constable was one of my seminary professors who makes his expository notes on the entire Bible available online for free! Feel free to download them at www.soniclight.com and enjoy this great resource!

- Bruce, Alexander.B. *The Training of the Twelve.*
  - Bruce was a Scottish pastor who lived in the late 1800’s. His observations on the ways Jesus prepared his disciples are very helpful. This book is downloadable for free from www.ccel.org (Christian Classics Ethereal Library)

- Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. *Homilies on John & 1 John.*
  - Aside from the Apostles, St. Augustine is regarded by many to be one of the most influential father’s of the church. Also downloadable from CCEL.

- Harris, John. *Notes on the Gospel of John.*
  - I don’t know much about Mr. Harris, but his notes were recommended to me by a friend and they proved most helpful (and concise). He helps write for www.bible.org and has several notes that are very well done.

  - Pastor Nelson is the Sr. Pastor at Denton Bible Church in Denton, TX. I downloaded his sermon series when he preached through this book in the late 90’s at www.dbcmeadia.org. One of my favorite teaching pastors.

  - Dr. Brandenburg is pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in Dallas, TX and has been a friend of Pine Cove for years – even serving on our board. He was gracious enough to send me his notes from when he preached through John.

- Murray, Andrew. *The True Vine and With Christ in the School of Prayer.*
  - Murray was a writer, pastor and teacher from South Africa who lived in the mid to late 1800’s. His books are tremendous (and also free for download at CCEL).
The Upper Room Discourse
Week 1: Introduction

Why Study the Upper Room Discourse?
1. No other Gospel writer discusses in detail the final words of Jesus to His disciples in the Upper Room during the Last Supper.
2. Final words are very important – even in our culture today. These are Jesus’ final instructions before leaving them to establish the Church.
4. Helps us to check our definition of discipleship and, thus, what we mean when we say that we are disciples or followers of Jesus Christ.
5. You become what you follow. You will look like what you worship. And those who follow you will look like you. We better be sure we’re following Jesus and not our own creation or conception of who He is.
6. To give you something to teach. The entire point and purpose of this study is not the stockpiling of more information – it is meant to be reproduced in the lives of people you are investing in. I’ve just done all the homework for you! 😊

Defining Discipleship:
Throughout the course of this study, it will be our goal to observe and discover Jesus’ promises to and expectations of those who would follow in his footsteps. The Upper Room Discourse is not only rich in theological truth, but also a source of Jesus’ most intimate words to His followers just before His death. No where else do we have such a detailed record of His final instructions than in these few chapters in John. The promises and commandments in these 5 chapters give us much to challenge our current picture of discipleship and disciple-making.

As we familiarize ourselves with the text, we will stop at different points to notice these definitions of discipleship that Jesus models, states, and commands for His followers. The ultimate lesson, we shall realize, is that Jesus’ desire for his disciples is not wrapped up in programs, formulas, doctrines, or ideals. He is much more concerned with our lives being one with His - in just the same manner as He is with God the Father.

- “Our Lord is not the great Teacher of the world; He is the Savior of the world and the Teacher of those who believe in Him, which is a radically different matter. . .All the teaching in the world about a man having a pure heart won't make it pure. Our Lord's teaching has no power in it unless I possess His nature.”
- “When we are called to follow Christ, we are summoned to an exclusive attachment to his person . . . Because the Son of God became Man, because he is the Mediator, for that reason alone the only true relation we can have with him is to follow him.”
- “I am learning from Jesus to live my life as he would live my life if he were I. I am not necessarily learning to do everything he did, but I am learning how to do everything I do in the manner that he did all that he did.”

Background on John’s Gospel:
- “I like the comparison of John’s Gospel to a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim. It is both simple and profound. It is for the veriest beginner in the faith and for the mature Christian.”

Date & Location:
- “It seems impossible to identify the date of writing very exactly, as evidenced by the difference of opinion that exists between excellent conservative scholars. A date...”

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1 Chambers, Oswald. Conformed to His Image.
2 Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. Cost of Discipleship. This point cannot be emphasized enough. I am not summoned to an attachment to a belief system or particular patterns of behavior. I am summoned to attach myself to Jesus himself so that the life He lives may live in me. This point will come to bear in Chapter 15 when Jesus commands His disciples to abide in Him.
3 Willard, Dallas. The Divine Conspiracy.
sometime between A.D. 65 and 95 is probable.”

Thus, the Gospel of John was most likely written after the three synoptics.

- Eusebius wrote that John ministered to the church in Ephesus, which Paul had founded (c.f. Acts 19:1-20), and recorded John’s authorship of the Gospel there as well. It is also important to note that Ephesus was a large hub for Christians at this time.6

**Differences from The Synoptics:**

- John is not a synoptic gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the synoptic gospels because they present a unified, historical account of the life and ministry of Jesus. John, however, compiles his material differently than the synoptics and tells the story of Jesus much differently.

- “About 93 percent of the material in John's Gospel does not appear in the Synoptics. This fact indicates the uniqueness of this Gospel compared with the other three and explains why they bear the title "Synoptic" and John does not.”7

- “He omitted Jesus' genealogy, birth, baptism, temptation, exorcizing demons, parables, transfiguration, institution of the Lord's Supper, agony in Gethsemane, and ascension. He focused on Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem, the Jewish feasts, Jesus' private conversations with individuals, and His preparation of His disciples (chs. 13—17).”8

- John’s gospel is the most widely attacked and discarded of the four. If you are going to be a student of the Scriptures – John’s Gospel in particular – you need to take the time to consider the arguments against his authorship, date of writing, and historical reliability. Undoubtedly, John presents many challenges, but we have little time to cover those issues in this study.

**Purpose:** John 20:30-31

- “Few would deny that the Johannine account is primarily theological. John has made no attempt to present a sequence of bare historical facts. He is concerned that what he relates has a dogmatic purpose. He relates incidents, not for their own sake, but to lead his readers to faith.”9

**Background on the use of “believe” in John’s Gospel:**10

- The word for believe is *pisteuo* and is a verb. It is used in John’s gospel 98 times. The corresponding noun, *pistis*, is completely absent.

- John uses *pisteuo* in four ways:
  i. Believing facts (12 times)
  ii. Believing people (19 times)
  iii. Believing ‘in’ Christ (36 times)
  iv. Believe (30 times)

- Faith, for John, is an activity that takes people right out of themselves and makes them one with Christ. It is not something one possesses. It is something one does. Faith is not a static being but a dynamic becoming.

- It may be no coincidence that it is this Gospel that speaks so much of believing that also speaks of ‘abiding’ in God or in Christ. While they are not connected in so many words, they clearly mean the same thing. In fact it might be hel that the abiding in Christ that is stressed in Chapter 15 is practically equivalent to believing (especially if John sees believing as an activity rather than mental exercise or intellectual assent).

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7 ibid

8 ibid

9 ibid

10 Special appendix from Morris’ commentary, p296-298. Virtually all are direct quotations.
• So important is the conception of believing ‘in’ Christ that the verb can be used absolutely, with no object expressed. There is no need in this Gospel to say who is in mind when ‘believing’ is spoken of. This is well illustrated in 9:35-38.

• Basic is the idea of that activity of believing which takes the believer out of himself and makes him one with Christ. But really to believe the Father or really to believe the facts about Christ inevitably involves this activity. Whichever way the terminology is employed it stresses the attitude of trustful reliance on God as he is revealed in Jesus Christ his Son.

- **Background of the use of the word “Life” in John’s Gospel.**
  - Life is one of John’s characteristic concepts: he uses the word 36 times, whereas no other New Testament writing has it more than 17 times.
  - Life does not exist in its own right. It is not even spoken of as made ‘by’ or ‘through’ the Word, but as existing ‘in’ him (1:4). There is probably a characteristic double meaning here. The life of which John writes is in the first instance the kind of life that we find throughout this earth, but this will call to mind that spiritual life which is so much the more significant that John can speak of it as ‘the life’. This Gospel constantly associates life with the Word (*logos*). Consider 3:16, 5:26, 6:51-54, 10:10, 10:18, 10:28, 11:25, 14:6.
  - The life that Christians possess is not in any sense independent of Christ. It is a life that is ‘hidden with Christ in God’ (Col 3:3). The important thing about eternal life is not its quantity, but its quality. In John’s writings, death is an ethical condition, the condition of failure and evil in which men exist by nature and out of which they are raised by Christ. The ‘life’ is the new condition – the spiritual order of being, the existence of fellowship with God into which Christ brings men; and the ‘eternal life’ is this life in its quality of the divine order of life, the life which fulfills the whole idea of life, the good of life, the perfection of life, the satisfaction of life in God.
  - “Life is power to act and respond in specific kinds of relations. For example, a cabbage has certain powers of action and response and a corresponding level of life. There is a big difference between a cabbage that is alive and one that is dead, though the dead one still exists. This can also be said of a snail or a kitten.
    - But a live cabbage can make no response to, say, a ball of string. That is precisely because of the kind of life that is in it. Though alive as a cabbage, it is dead to the realm of physical play. Similarly a kitten playing with the string can make no response to numbers or poetry, and in that sense is dead to the realms of arithmetic and literature. A live cabbage, though dead to one realm (that of play) is yet alive in another – that of the soil, the sun and the rain.
    - Human beings were once alive to God. They were created to be responsive to and interactive with him. When they mistrusted God and disobeyed him, that cut them off from the realm of the Spirit. Thus they became dead in relation to it – much as a kitten is dead to arithmetic.
    - Biologically they continued to live, of course. But they ceased to be responsive and interactive in relation to God’s cosmic rule in his kingdom. It would be necessary for God to confer an additional level of life on them and their children, through being ‘born from above’ (3:3) in order for them once again to be alive to God, to be able to respond toward him and to act within the realm of the Spirit.”

**Background to the Discourse:**

- This really isn’t a sermon because it’s not delivered to the public. It’s only focused on the disciples – those who will continue his mission beyond his departure and until his return.

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12 Excerpt from Dallas Willard’s *Hearing God*. Though it is not in relation to the text of the Upper Room Discourse specifically, I find his illustration of what Morris explains most helpful in understanding the kind of ‘life’ John is speaking of in his Gospel.
It’s addressed to believers only (with the exception of the first half of ch 13) and intended to give them hope and inspire faithfulness.

- These are literally Jesus’ final words to his disciples. He *knows* he is about to die the very next day – thus the importance of all he says to his closest followers cannot be underscored enough.
- The essential thing for us to notice throughout the discourse is that Jesus models for us in his relationship to the Father the way that we ought to relate to Him. Like Father, like Son.
- Ch 13 is a major division in the book. Everything prior to it has to deal with Jesus’ public ministry. Chapters 13-17 are his private ministry.
- The context of the early 1st century church must also be considered. Persecution had begun, Gnosticism was beginning to become a major influence, and the Roman Empire remained a prominent influence on all aspects of life.

**Tough Question:**
1. Is it possible to be a Christian and not a disciple of Jesus?

**Practice Obedience this Week:**
1. Give someone reason or opportunity to believe in Jesus and have life in His name.
John 13:1-20:


- This story appears to be one of the major back-stories to the beginning of Jesus’ discourse with the disciples. It’s reasonable to believe that Jesus’ washing the disciples feet not only is in direct contrast with the lack of humility of the disciples, but also foreshadows the ultimate act of service that is just about to transpire in his crucifixion.
  - Ironically the disciples were arguing about their ascent to power and Jesus would model for them that the only way to ascend to power is to descend and become a servant.
- Since Passover was a ceremony that was required to be observed in your home, it is reasonable to conclude that this is the one and only Passover meal that the disciples shared with their Master – even though they were with him for over three years. We have no other record of other Passover observances by these men together except for this one.

“world” (Gr: kosmos)

- Occurs 40 times in these five chapters (78 times in the book). For John, there is a, literally, night and day difference between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the World. This contrast bears itself out over the coming chapters.

“He loved them to the end”¹

- Other translations say that ‘end’ can also be rendered as ‘uttermost’ or ‘utterly’.
- It’s unusual these days to see love last that long. Typically we love until the first disappointment or inconvenience or cost.
- And, yet, Jesus loved us even when He knew what the end would require of him...and while we were yet sinners! He was no martyr. He walked straight in to the cross – not led there by the Jews or the Romans – but by this uttermost love. What kind of God does something like this?!
  - Consequently, we never need to question His love for us. But what about our love for him? Do we love him utterly? Or do we only love him until the first disappointment or cost?
    - Were the whole realm of nature mine
    - That were an offering far too small
    - Love so amazing, so divine
    - Demands my soul, my life, my all.²
  - How can we love him with our hearts that are cold and dark with sin? Consider the light of the moon. Some nights you can walk outside and read by the moonlight, but the surface of the moon is just as cold and dark as our heart feels – without one spark of light. Moonlight is sunlight reflected. It borrows it from the sun and shines it down on the earth. So, any love I have is His love reflected in me.
    - This is the over-arching theme of the remainder of the discourse.

What Jesus knew influenced what Jesus did:

- We may not necessarily know the future or the will of the Father, but we do know what is expected of us (13:34, 15:8, etc). What we know about God should always have an impact on our behavior (especially when our behavior should be counter-cultural). An informed theology produces a Christ-centered identity which always yields God-glorifying activity.

² Watts, Isaac.  When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
Consider all that Jesus knew:
- That his hour had come...
- That he would be going to the Father...
- The imminent betrayal of Judas...
- All things had been given into his hands...
- He had come forth from God and was returning to Him...
- “The Father had put all things into the Son’s hands, yet Jesus picked up a towel and a basin! It is remarkable how the Gospel of John reveals the humility of our Lord while magnifying His deity.”
  - If you were aware of all of these things, would your first impulse be to wash the dust off of the feet of your own creation? Knowing all these things didn’t create entitlement in the heart of Jesus – it prompted service. What kind of God does this?!
  - “Here we have an unexpected twist. Instead of something like ‘knowing what Judas would do,’ we have ‘knew that the Father had put all things under his power.’ The threshold of Calvary seems an unlikely place for a statement of sovereignty like this.”

**DEFINITION #1: A DISCIPLE MUST BE HUMBLE**
- The foot washing normally would have happened at the beginning of the observance as the disciples entered into the house. It is clear from the text that this occurs after the arrival of the disciples, but before the meal is over. Normally a servant would have performed this act, but because of the probably secrecy of the meal, there was none present.
- No doubt foot-washing is an example of the humility of Jesus, but it also gives us a look into the humility (or lack thereof) of the disciples. Only a humble person can receive service from his Master.
  - “We are ready, perhaps, to be humble before God; but we do not want Him to be humble in his dealings with us. Man’s humility does not begin with the giving of service; it begins with the readiness to receive it. For there can be much pride and condescension in our giving of service.”
  - Instead of trusting our Master, much of our study and devotion can often be easily mistaken as service “for” Jesus. In fact, we can get so worked up about what we are doing “for” Jesus, that we’ll often think that those things we do (or don’t do) are what give us right relationship with Him – like Peter does, here. This, of course, is more pride than anything else. How? Because we will often equate our service for Jesus with our relationship with him. The humble way is for us to recognize that Jesus doesn’t need to be served. We do. This kind of humility leads to an actual following of Jesus rather than a performance contest amongst believers who are really just insecure about their relationship with Christ.

**“He came to Simon Peter”**
- There is no mention of any other comment from any other disciple. Perhaps they were all stunned silent. Perhaps they were all willing to receive service from their Rabbi. Perhaps Peter was the only one who had the guts to say what they all felt. We’ll never really know.
- There are several reasons why Peter may have been the only one to speak up. Some scholars believe Peter to be the oldest disciple and, thus, would always have the first word in any given teaching situation.
  - Another theory supposes that it was actually Peter’s responsibility to be the foot-washer that evening. When Jesus comes to serve him, not only is it humiliating because his master is washing his feet, but he’s also

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3 Temple, quoted by Morris.
doing the job that, perhaps, Peter forgot to do.

- Nevertheless, we see here that Jesus washed the feet of all the men in the room – including Judas Iscariot. He washed the feet of the very man that would betray him. This is the type of love and service that is supposed to be characteristic of Jesus’ disciples. Only a humble man can wash the feet of his betrayer.

**DEFINITION #2: A DISCIPLE IS NOT YET A RABBI**

- Peter is always brazen and outspoken. Here he demonstrates his passion for Jesus, but also his unwillingness to listen to his Master. We cannot become disciples on our own terms. He does this in three ways:
  - First, by ignoring what Jesus has just spoken to him. Jesus has just promised Peter understanding of what he has done and it seems that Peter doesn’t even listen to His Master’s promise – which leaves him very little opportunity to place his faith in his Master’s words above his own (quite limited) understanding.
  - Second, in his ignorance, Peter dictates to his Rabbi what he should and should not do. Peter is not meaning to be insubordinate. "He is humble enough to see the incongruity of Christ's action, yet proud enough to dictate to his Master." This is not the position a follower should take.
  - Third, he assumes he understands why Jesus is washing his feet and, seemingly, “improves” on Jesus’ mere foot washing by wanting an entire bath.

- It’s easy to forgive Peter for being so rash sometimes. He didn’t know what was about to happen – how the story was going to end. It’s easy to excuse. But what about us? We have a vantage point that Peter never could have had and yet we, just like Peter, ignore, dictate, and make assumptions about our Rabbi. Is he not trustworthy? We have every reason to trust him! In fact, the only way we can show him that our love for him is as trustworthy is in our obedience of his commands – no matter how absurd they may be.

- Over the years we may find ourselves Rabbi’s in the lives of other people – but we will always be disciples of the One Rabbi: Jesus.

“**If I do not wash you, you have no part with me**”

- If we are disciples, then we must go the way of our Rabbi - regardless of what we think, feel, or even know to be true. This is a concept that a post-Christian world can never cozy up with. Jesus makes exclusive claims throughout his earthly ministry for us to submit to His leadership – this being one of them. If we are too proud to obey, we choose to have no part with him.

- “Part” is the Greek term *meros*. The term literally means part of a whole, but its usage is close to our terms share, heritage, and/or inheritance.

  - Thus, if Jesus is sacrificially giving of himself for us – whether by washing our feet or by his death on the cross – if we do not receive his service, we have no access to the inheritance that would have been ours if we would have received his ministry on our behalf.
    - One cannot receive an inheritance unless two things are true: First, the person who is passing the inheritance on must die. Second, the persons receiving the inheritance must be heirs – legally and relationally.
    - See also Titus 3:4-7; Romans 8:16-17; Gal 3:25-4:7

- So again, we see that submission and obedience to the Lordship of Jesus is

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6 MacGregor, as quoted in Morris. P548.
7 I think this is obvious foreshadowing of all that Jesus begins to teach the disciples in Chapter 14 about the connections between love and obedience. His comments here lay a foundation for those teachings. I also think there are some principles here that help us understand what Jesus means when he tells us to “abide in Me” and “abide in my love.”
8 Harris, John.
testimony that we are his. What other means do we have to show our affection and devotion?

v.10-11 **Washing, bathing, and being clean**

- Washed in 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 is "nipto" – which is to wash part of the body
- Bathed is "louo" only here which means to bathe all over
- Clean is "katharos" – which can be a reference to ceremonial cleanliness
- Some observations & thoughts:
  - It appears that the disciples are already *katharos*. The text seems to imply that their *katharos* did not come from His washing of their feet. They were already *katharos* before they arrived.
  - How could they be clean before they arrived? They were ceremonially clean. It is possible that the disciples had recently bathed themselves in a mikveh before coming to the meal – not unusual especially because of the observance of Passover. Having walked to the meal, they wouldn’t need another ceremonial cleansing, but simply a washing of the feet.
  - It is reasonable to consider, then, that Jesus’ actions are both a customary part of what normally would have happened and a foreshadowing of another type of cleansing that Peter ‘will not understand now, but afterward will understand.’ One that Jesus was already well aware of. He uses a ritual act that would have normally been performed at the meal as a physical picture of what He is about to accomplish on the cross for those who are His: a spiritual and permanent cleansing that has never been possible before. One that is only possible through our exclusive partnership with Jesus (not more ritual baths we can take on our own). To accept the act from their master was to accept his future, much greater sacrifice as their own and to, eventually, follow in his footsteps.

v.12-15 **DEFINITION #3: A DISCIPLE LOOKS LIKE HIS/HER RABBI**

- There are two approaches we can have to discipleship. The first is to know everything our Rabbi knows. Once we get all the information from him, we’ll be ready for our own ministry and no longer have need of our teacher. The other is to learn how to be all that our Rabbi is. Spending day after day with him, we certainly know what he knows, but we also start to think like he thinks, see like he sees, and live as he would live if he were us.
  - The great temptation, especially for the evangelicals in the west, is to simply know about Jesus without becoming like him. We can know what the foot washing symbolized, how it was done, and why we ought to do the same to our brothers and sisters, but it doesn’t change our way of living. We run the risk of becoming know-it-all’s who don’t do-at-all.
- In the day of Jesus it wasn’t enough to know what your Rabbi knew. Anyone can hold information in their head. But can you actually become like your Rabbi? Knowing everything about airplanes and how they work doesn’t make you a good pilot. Same applies to your relationship with Jesus – you can know all the Scriptures in the world, but if you don’t look like Jesus, He must not be your teacher (as we shall eventually see from Judas).
- What is it exactly that we should do?
  - Literal observance of foot washing?
    - “Jesus called foot-washing an example (Gr. hypodeigma, pattern) implying that there are other examples of the same attitude. This was an appropriate example of humble service in a culture where people wore sandals and soiled their feet easily.”

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9 A mikveh was a ceremonial bath where a person immerses to become ritually clean according to Jewish law. It had to be 4 feet deep as to be able to totally immerse the person.
10 Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.*
Metaphorical image of gladly taking a lower role in order to serve others.
  - See also Philippians 2
  - Self-sacrifice to the point of death – lay down your lives for each other.
    - “The footwashing is an act of humble service for others, symbolic of the humiliating service Jesus will render in laying down his life for others. The example Jesus has given is not just one of humble service, but of humble service to the point of death.”
  - I believe all three views are acceptable, but find the latter to be the most convincing and consistent with what has been and will be taught in the discourse.

v.16-20 “a slave is not greater than his master. . .”
  - Jesus immediately reinforces that a disciple should be just like his Rabbi by saying this aphorism. Jesus isn’t above the Father. The Father is the Messenger and the Son proclaims the message in just the way the Father would do if the Father were to have delivered it himself. Why? Like Father, like Son. Similarly, we should follow Jesus’ example. But just in case we start to get proud again, we are urged to remember:
    - “No disciple should think it beneath him/her to serve others since He, the master and sender, had humbled himself to serve.”
  - We should not be misled by our own feelings, too. Most of us don’t mind performing acts of service – especially if those we serve treat us well or even admire us for so serving. The disciples would soon be tested on this fact when Jesus would ask them to go into a world that will hate and persecute them and still perform acts of service.

“if you know these things, you are blessed if you do them”
  - “The construction of this phrase carries the implication that in fact they did know them, but leaves it an open question whether they act on their knowledge.”
  - If you DO them...not take note, memorize, study, etc. them.
  - Again, what is the best way we can demonstrate our love for Jesus? Obedience.
  - Jesus will go on and on throughout this sermon about the joy and peace that come from a life fully submitted to the father. A resigned life, however, is one of the most unpopular concepts in our culture today. Many atheists and agnostics find the idea of religion reprehensible for this very reason alone. This is especially true if you live in a post-modern culture that says that each individual is a source of truth & has no need of a dogma or any other system to tell him what she can or can’t do. Be careful that the world’s culture doesn’t creep into your following of Jesus.

Fulfilling the Scripture of Psalm 41:9
  - “The Son of David experienced treason from a close friend as the original David had. Perhaps the betrayer of David in view was Ahithophel, who also committed suicide (2 Sam. 15:12; 16:15-23; 17:3-4, 14, 23). Betrayal by one who had received table hospitality was especially heinous in the ancient Near East. Lifting up the heel against someone was probably a way of saying that one had walked out on his friend.”
  - Notice how the betrayal of a friend does not deter Jesus from being obedient to what His Father has asked him to do.

11 Harris, John. Notes on the Gospel of John. See also John 15:13, 1 John 3:16, 4:11
12 Constable
13 Morris
14 Constable, Thomas. Notes on the Gospel of John
“. . . He who receives me . . .”

- Given the immediate context we notice that Jesus is not afraid of confrontation. He knows Judas’ heart and the turmoil therein and that it cannot be avoided. Before confronting him directly, however, it seems that Jesus gives him every opportunity to change his mind.
- This statement is a good conclusion to this section. Jesus has spelled out in detail what it means to receive him and why it is important. This transitions us to the next section where John talks more in depth about the one disciple who did not receive him.
- Note also the parallel to 1 John 2:23 and the theme of 13:8.

**Tough Questions:**
1. What if a disciple doesn’t look like his/her Rabbi? Does that invalidate their ‘disciple’ status?
2. How ought we do relate to someone who wants no ‘part’ with Jesus?

**Practice Obedience this Week:**
1. Wash someone’s feet – literally or figuratively.
John 13:21-35:  
**“He became troubled in spirit”**

- Notice how Jesus deals with sin at the Last Supper as you read.
- These are the passages that remind us of the true humanity of Jesus. He knew that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he was going back to God and that his hour had come – and yet he became troubled in spirit. How are we supposed to understand this?
  - ‘Troubled’ is *tarasso* and can be used to describe becoming agitated, disturbed, and/or perplexed. It’s the same word that is used in 12:27 when Jesus speaks about the coming of the hour.
  - “Jesus is in complete control of the situation, yet he is not emotionally oblivious to the events which have come upon him.”
  - What is troubling to Jesus? The coming of the hour and all that it contains or Judas’ imminent betrayal? Considering that the betrayal is the focus of the past 3 verses and the coming 10, it seems reasonable to conclude that Jesus is upset by Judas’ choice. He has invested three years into the life of this man – this must certainly be painful for Jesus to know (13:3) and now experience.

**“One of you will betray me”**

- Betrayal stands in direct contrast to the previous section on receiving (v.20). John is clear about who is a disciple and follower of Jesus and who is not. There are two kingdoms in play and it is clear in John’s mind that one cannot be a citizen of both. Ultimately, our true allegiance will be found out.
- Timothy Keller suggests that betrayal is the removal of someone’s power over you – someone whose power you need. Betrayal is discipleship on your own terms.
  - Sin is, ultimately, a betrayal of God. It is to say to God, “I have no need of you”, which is exactly what our culture is declaring these days. Incidentally, betrayal doesn’t have to be grandiose and scandalous like Judas’ here. It can be small, slight and often overlooked.
- Why did Judas Betray Jesus? A few schools of thought:
  - Judas believed that Jesus’ claims to be Messiah and King were dangerous
  - Jesus’ demands/requirements were not what Judas had envisioned
  - Judas could have been jealous of Peter, James & John since they were obviously the 3 disciples closest to Jesus.
  - Judas felt betrayed when Jesus didn’t live up to his picture of what he thought Messiah would be and accomplish.
- The disciples are puzzled simply because Judas had been a good traitor. He had hidden his own hypocrisy well – perhaps even from himself for much of the time. The disciples even thought quite highly of Judas – suggesting that his departure was related to giving something to the poor (v.29). The disciples never considered it a possibility for themselves or for each other.
  - None of us would ever dream of apostasy. We don’t wake up in the morning thinking, “I think I’ll betray Jesus tonight.” But, as we are all too familiar, there are many so-called believers who get to this point. And we would all be puzzled to think that one of our own could do such a horrible thing. And it is always troubling to those who have invested in that man or woman – to see them make the wrong decision. Ultimately, though, it reveals who their true Rabbi is (and it is not Jesus).

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1 Harris, John.
v.23-26 “There was reclining on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples whom he loved”

- Before we go any further – can you imagine having this kind of relationship with your creator? Stunning to think about.
- This is the first of several references to John as the beloved disciple (19:26-27; 20:2-9; 21:1, 20-25; Mk 14:47, 51).
  - “John was not claiming that Jesus loved him more than the other disciples by describing himself this way. Rather the description reveals his appreciation for God's grace in loving him as He did.”²

- The Triclenium table & possible seating arrangement³

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- “It was customary to sit at most meals. Reclining at table, a Hellenistic custom, was reserved for special meals. When first introduced into the Jewish world, it was probably a sign of extreme decadence (Am. 6:4-7), but by New Testament times it was normal at important banquets and feasts, and therefore was virtually required at the Passover celebration, almost as a mark of unhurried celebration and freedom, in self-conscious contrast with the haste with which the first Passover was eaten on the night of the exodus.”⁴ During the meal you would recline on your left side – using your left elbow to support your body and right arm to eat.
- Thus, it is reasonable to describe/explain why John was depicted as lying in Jesus bosom because the disciple to Jesus’ right would have been just in front of him – lying on his left side.
- Peter’s placement is apparently not close enough to Jesus to be able to hear his words or ask him directly who the betrayer was. He was close enough to be able to signal and ask John to speak with Him.
- Judas’ placement must be close to Jesus if he is going to dip a piece of bread and give it to him.
  - “The morsel or piece of bread was probably a piece of unleavened bread that Jesus had dipped into the bowl of paschal stew. Passover participants normally did this early in the meal. The host would sometimes do this and pass a morsel of bread and meat to an honored guest.”⁵
  - Notice that Jesus is not trying to condemn Judas, he’s trying to convert him! Many of us would have pointed him out in front of the rest of the disciples, but Jesus is patient and kind towards Judas – giving him every opportunity to change his mind.
    - Consider Romans 2:1-5 here
- It is apparent that Jesus did not want to make this question something for the entire group to hear, so we can assume that his answer to John’s question was spoken only to him (and it doesn’t appear that John ever returned the answer to Peter – perhaps because he himself was confused).

v.27-30 “Satan entered into him.”

² Constable, Tom.
³ I learned about this seating arrangement while on my first trip to Israel – so I have no specific sources to cite. However, the tour company is affiliated with That The World May Know ministries (Ray Vander Leeen).
Though John speaks about the Devil frequently throughout the gospel, this is the only time he uses the name ‘Satan’ in the entire gospel.

As mentioned in the first lesson, John is continually contrasting light and darkness – the kingdom of heaven versus the kingdom of the world. Judas is a perfect foil for the believer because he allows Satan to abide within him. As we are about to see in chapters 14 and 15, Jesus is supposed to abide in the believer.

Was Judas a believer?
- It seems unlikely that Judas was a believer. He is not clean (v.10) like the other disciples, Satan makes his abode within him (v.2,27), and the disciples did not regard him as one of their own (Acts 1:16-25). In spite of those things, none of the disciples – at the time – were aware of it.

“For some were supposing . . . buy the things we need for the feast . . . poor”
- Judas is one of the greatest hypocrites of all time. A phony. Jesus is telling all of the disciples that he is about to be betrayed by one of their own, and apparently Judas is at the bottom of that list. They had even put him in charge of the money. And when he leaves, they assume that he is going to buy food for the upcoming Feast of Unleavened bread or to give something to the poor (a common practice during the week of the Feast).
  - Discipleship is obviously not about how hard one tries to be a disciple, right? Judas did enough of the right things that he was made treasurer – and yet he was never a disciple to begin with.
  - Furthermore, discipleship cannot be about your own agenda. You must completely submit your will to that of the Father’s because there is not enough room in your life for two wills.

“He went out immediately; and it was night.”
- “As the Light of the world was about to depart and return to the Father, the darkness had come at last (cf. Luke 22:53). Again the contrast in imagery is clear. For John, Jesus is the Light of the world, and those who believe in Him come to the light and walk in the light. At the opposite extreme is Judas Iscariot, who rejected Jesus, cast in his lot with the powers of darkness, departed into the darkness, and was swallowed up by it.”
  - See also John 1:5; 8:12; 12:35; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:8-10;

v.31-33 “Now is the Son of Man glorified . . .” (NOT defeated)
- Judas’ departure was the last piece that needed to fall into place before the “hour” could begin. Now that he was gone – there was no turning back. In fact, it was so guaranteed, Jesus references his own glorification in the past tense. He was going back to the Father – bringing glory to Him all the way.
- With Judas gone, only the ‘clean’ believers remain. Jesus could begin to unpack all that he wishes to share with his disciples in his farewell speech to them.
  - “The farewell speech is well-established as a literary genre in the Old Testament. For example, the blessings of Jacob to his children in Genesis 47-49, the farewell of Joshua to the nation of Israel in Josh 22-24, and David’s farewell speech in 1 Chr 28-29.”
  - Notice that glory comes in the form of a cat of nine tails, desertion, condemnation, torture, crucifixion and resurrection. That sounds more like defeat than a way of glory. What kind of a God would walk this kind of road for obstinate sinners?

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5 Constable, Tom.  
6 Morris, Leon.  
7 Harris, John.
"Christianity is not a religion that you could invent if you would – nor is it a religion that you would invent if you could."

And when I think that God His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin.
.....How great Thou Art!

"Little children"

- Many commentators regard this phrase to be a “tender term for his disciples that showed his strong affection for them as members of his family.”
- There are another school of scholars who believe that the disciples were actually younger in age than we typically assume. Of course we know that Peter is married (Matt 8:14) (which may also be evidence to believe he is the oldest disciple), but the age of the rest of the disciples could be younger. Most Jewish boys followed a Rabbi when they were teenagers – not adults. This seems entirely reasonable to me – just as much as the other interpretation.

"Where I am going, you cannot come."

- Jesus had made it clear to the Jews and now to the Disciples that he was not going to stay. In fact, as we will find out in chapter 14, it is better if Jesus goes away. The disciples, however, did not understand this – no one did. They believed Messiah was to reign on the Throne of David and kick out the Romans. Furthermore, these disciples had been following Jesus around Israel for the past three years because He said to them, "Follow me." Now they can't follow him?

DEFINITION #4: A DISCIPLE LOVES LIKE JESUS

"A new commandment I give you. . . love one another."

- How is this commandment a new one? (See Lev. 19:18, 1 Jn 2:7-8, 3:11)
  - It's a new commandment (i.e. the 11th commandment)?
  - A new commandment to replace the old ones?
  - A new standard of love?
    - It was also a new (Gr. kainen, fresh rather than different) commandment in that it was part of a new covenant that Jesus would ratify with His blood (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). In that covenant God promised to enable His people to love by transforming their hearts and minds (Jer. 31:29-34; Ezek. 36:24-26). It is only by God's transforming grace that believers can love one another as Jesus has loved us.
    - Believers in Jesus are able to love others with an extra-ordinary love. We are now called to love other not just with natural love, but with supernatural love. God will take people who know nothing other than humanly love and make it possible for them to have godly love.
  - A new motivation for love?
    - "The love Jesus has for his followers cannot be duplicated by them in one sense, since he lays down his life for them (it is an act of

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8 Wesley, Charles.
9 Boberg, Carl Gustav. How Great Thou Art
10 Constable, Tom.
11 "Students became a religious adult at age thirteen, and gifted students continued their studies beyond this age in secondary school, beth midrash. Here they began the process of studying the Torah and the Haftorah (the rest of the Hebrew Testament) and applying it to specific situations. Many students studied half the day, and learned a trade the other half. After age 15, the truly gifted would travel and study with a famous rabbi as a talmid (disciple). The disciple's goal was to "become like their rabbi" by learning and applying the wisdom of Torah and oral tradition to daily situations." That The World May Know Ministries, found at www.followtherabbi.com.
12 Constable, Tom.
love that gives life to men). But in another sense they can follow his example. *Thus* are Jesus’ disciples to love one another: they are to follow his example of sacrificial service to one another, to death if necessary."¹³

- It’s also noteworthy to mention that the Greek words for love appear 44 times in the second half of the book (13-21) compared to only 12 times in the first twelve chapters.

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples. . .”

- Notice it is by our love that we will be recognized as disciples – not the number of books we write, verses we have memorized or number of service hours we log. Thus, the key to the future of the church is found our ability to love one another and the world around us. Yes, it’s even more important than books, seminaries, legislating prayer in schools, or even avoiding sin.
- God desiring us to be known as His people is definitely not a new concept (i.e. the nation of Israel). This kind of love will/should/ought to distinguish us from all the other nations of the world. But now it’s not just laws of cleanliness, abstinence, or faithfulness that set us apart. Now it’s this new lifestyle (as defined by Jesus) that doesn’t set itself about by isolation or simple “not doing what the world does.” Followers of Jesus love people like no one else in the world can.
  - "If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother."¹⁴
  - "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God”¹⁵
- This ties in everything we have learned in this chapter. A servant is not above his master. If we are servants and followers of Jesus, we should expect to give ourselves sacrificially to others – whether that is by the simple, yet humiliating, act of washing feet or even giving our lives up for others.
- So much of what we consider following of Jesus today is wrapped up in verbal declaration. We really want people to know that we love Jesus, but we’ve settled for telling people by the clothes we wear, things we put on our cars, the parties we don’t attend, and the Scripture we’ve got memorized. It’s not that these things are good or bad as much as we continue to miss the point of how to be recognized as a follower of Jesus.
  - These are actually ways to be more like Judas than Jesus.

“Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."*

1 John 4:8-11

**Tough Questions:**

1. Why is love a commandment?
2. What do we mean when we say, “I love you”?

**Practice Obedience:**

1. Love someone

¹³ Harris, John.
¹⁴ 1 John 4:20-21
¹⁵ 1 Peter 1:22-23 – like Father, like son….like Rabbi, like disciple
John 13:36 - 4:7:  
"Lord, where are you going?"

- Peter seems aghast that Jesus would do something like this without his approval, consultation or prior knowledge. It's innocent – he doesn’t expect Jesus to answer to him. What he does expect is to be able to follow his Rabbi – and his Rabbi has told them where they were going in the past.

- Peter seems to ignore Jesus’ new commandment and wants to go back and talk about what Jesus meant at the end of verse 33. Hard to fault Peter for his words here. These men had dropped everything and had been following Jesus (their Rabbi!) for over three years at this point – and now they are being told they cannot follow him – and with very little explanation as to why. It’s almost as if Peter feels entitled to know where Jesus is going because he expects to follow him there. For him not to follow his Rabbi is unthinkable.

- Jesus, in a very understanding way, answers Peter’s question quite directly. It’s almost as if Jesus is telling him, “Not this time, Peter. This is the one occasion where you cannot follow me – not because you lack the courage or the dedication, though. Believe me, you’ll get your chance to follow me soon enough.” (cf. 21:18-19) We’ll all get the chance to put our money where our mouth is – and it will come at the expense of our rejection (see ch 15 & 16).

"Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.”

- Well, the first time it was an understandable question. Peter asks the same question twice and Jesus is even more direct with him. Instead of answering his question this time, Jesus responds to Peter with a question that He answers for Peter. Ironically, the answer is condemning to Peter on two levels: one, Peter will not do as he claims he is willing to do. Second, Jesus actually will die for Peter.

- Peter’s pride, self-reliance, and arrogance towards Jesus stems from his underestimation and assumptions about his Rabbi. It’s likely that Peter and most of the other disciples believed/hoped that Jesus was about to inaugurate the Kingdom of God on the earth (and that’s what he was leaving to go and do). Peter is just as ready to get the coup started and isn’t afraid to die for the cause. But these things are entirely in Peter’s head and he is not really following Jesus at all.
  o The truth is, the disciples probably never expected Jesus to leave in the first place. They knew the scriptures that described the Messiah who would sit on the Throne of David. His departure before that would actually happen was never a possibility that entered their minds.

- What do we think of our devotion to Jesus? How accurate is our own estimation of our relationship with Him? Can we learn something from Peter? How much of our relationship with Jesus is wrapped up in mere verbal declaration?

"Rooster . . . deny”

- A rooster crows at the break of day. So, Peter’s denials will happen during the night – a key theme in the Gospel of John.

- Why would Peter deny Jesus at random? Jesus foretelling words seem to suggest that some kind of trial or test will befall Peter that will lead to his denying Jesus three times (he explains more about the trial later in chapter 16).
  o “Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with
gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”¹

- Why three times? The significance of the number can certainly be speculated. The number 3 has great significance within the Jewish culture. My guess is that Jesus is telling Peter that his denial will be unmistakable and quite thorough. It won’t be a half-hearted denial – he will do it three times... and mean it.
  - Worth your while to read the story of it in Mark 14:66-72

14:1 “Do not let your heart be troubled”

- There is not a change of subjects from the end of chapter 13 to the beginning of 14. Jesus hasn’t forgotten Peter’s question, “Where are you going?” The first four verses of chapter 14 are Jesus’ answer to Peter’s question.
- Jesus knows that his hour has come and that God has given everything into his hands, so He has no fear as He faces his own sacrificial death. As they face a similar eventual reality, His disciples should have the same confidence – not because of their knowledge, but because of their faith in God.
- If you want a fun study, do a search through the Scriptures on the phrase “Do not fear” or “Do not be afraid.” The number of times that phrase is mentioned throughout the Old and New Testaments is staggering.

“Believe in God, believe also in Me.”

- The verb for believe is pistueo which means ‘to trust’ or ‘to place confidence in’.² To believe is to ‘consciously and willfully abandon yourself to someone who is trustworthy.’³
- If we don’t have trust or confidence in God, then our hearts will most certainly become overwhelmed with worry and distress. Jesus’ words emphasize to the disciples that the existence of their faith in God has a direct effect on the emotional state of their hearts. Belief in God and having trouble in our hearts are inversely related.
- We usually don’t think of belief in God this way, but the command here also insinuates that we cannot (and must not) believe in ourselves. Peter comes across at the end of chapter 13 as self-reliant in his argument with Jesus. Jesus’ words here are an indictment on Peter (and all of us who are self-reliant). Peter’s heart is obviously troubled already! His self-reliance blinds him to the hope that’s sitting right in front of him.⁴
  - “The road to faith passes through obedience to the call of Jesus. Unless a definite step is demanded, the call vanishes into thin air, and if men imagine that they can follow Jesus without taking this step, they are deluding themselves like fanatics.”⁵

DEFINITION #5: A DISCIPLE IS RESIGNED TO GOD

- “Though good and bad men suffer alike, we must not suppose that there is no difference between the men themselves, because there is no difference in what they both suffer. For even in the likeness of the sufferings, there remains an unlikeness in the sufferers... And thus it is that in the same affliction the wicked detest God and blaspheme, while the good pray and praise. So material a difference does it make, not what ills are suffered, but what kind of man suffers them. For, stirred up with the same movement, mud exhales a horrible stench, and ointment emits a fragrant odor.”⁶
  - How do you handle your trials? Jesus is giving us another model here. He is the one about to die and He is the one doing the consoling!

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¹ 1 Peter 3:13-16
² Thayer’s Greek Dictionary.
³ Brandenburg, Gary. Sermon on John 13:36-14:7. 10/1/95.
⁴ Ibid., his sermon was helpful in pointing out Peter’s self-reliance.
⁵ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. The Cost of Discipleship.
⁶ Augustine. City of God.
We will always have faith. We will not always have faith in God – as both Peter and Judas illustrate for us here. If that is correct, what will keep my faith in God from wavering towards someone else?

- It is only in our utter resignation of ourselves to the will of God that we come to experience a belief that remains. Jesus was modeling this very idea for the disciples in this very moment as he spoke some of his final words to them just before He had to believe in God and entrust himself to Him (see also 1 Peter 2:21-25).
- In these first 4 verse of chapter 14 we have all the incentive we need to continue in our belief. Jesus is working on our behalf to bring us to himself. There is no command here for us other than to believe. In believing, we find our permanent place of abode.

In my Father’s house are many dwelling places

- ‘house’ is oikia and most likely refers to heaven. It is a real place and it is the same place where God makes his dwelling/abode.
- ‘dwelling places’ is mone. This word has been translated in many different ways and our contemporary understanding of it has shifted over the years. ‘Mansions’ is a bit deceiving because "the emphasis is not on the lavishness of the facility as much as its adequacy to accommodate all believers."\(^7\) Mone is actually the noun form of the verb “abide” which, in its verb form also carries the idea of permanence. The theme of abiding will continue to be an important one.
- There are many double meanings in this gospel and John Harris has pointed out one here that is worth considering:
  - “So far we have understood the reference to ‘my Father’s house’ as a reference to heaven. This seems consistent with the vocabulary and the context where in verse 3 Jesus speaks of coming again to take the disciples to himself. However, when we look for the phrase ‘my Father’s house’ in John’s gospel, we find it was used previously in 2:16 to refer to the Temple in Jerusalem. John in 2:19-22 then reinterpreted the Temple as Jesus’ body. Even more suggestive is the statement by Jesus in 8:35, ‘Now the slave does not remain (mone) in the household (oikia) forever, but the son remains (mone) forever.’ This suggests the permanent relationship of the believer to Jesus and the Father as an adopted son who remains in the household forever. In this case the ‘dwelling place’ is IN Jesus himself, where he is, whether in heaven or on earth.”\(^8\)

I go to prepare a place for you

- Finally Peter gets the answer to his question. This is where Jesus is going and also why Peter cannot follow. Peter cannot prepare a place for himself in his Father’s house – nor can he bring himself there. So, if Jesus doesn’t go, he cannot follow. Simultaneously, this departure is to be the consolation and hope of Peter and all other disciples who have a troubled heart. It continues the denunciation of a disciple’s self-reliance and encourages our full belief in God.

That where I am, there you may be also.

- Is this not the entire movement and mission of God since the fall of humanity? We created disunion between ourselves and God by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The result...
  - “Instead of knowing himself solely in the reality of being chosen and loved by God, he [mankind] must now know himself in the possibility of choosing and of being the origin of good and evil. He has become like God, but against God. Herein lies the serpent’s deceit. Man knows good and evil, but because he is not the origin, because he acquires this

\(^7\) Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.*
\(^8\) Harris, John. *Notes on John.*
knowledge only at the price of estrangement from the Origin, the good and evil he knows are not the good and evil of God but good and evil against God. They are good and evil of man’s own choosing. In becoming like God man has become a god against God. . . Man knows good and evil, against God, against his origin, godlessly and of his own choice, understanding himself according to his own contrary possibilities; and he is cut off from the unifying, reconciling life in God, and is delivered over to death. The secret which man has stolen from God is bringing about man’s downfall. Man’s life is now disunion with God, with men, with things and with himself.”

This is God’s grace to us that he desires to restore and reunite ourselves with him in every sense of the word (spiritually, relationally, physically). Jesus is Immanuel, ‘God with us’ and has come so that we can be reunited with God.

- The most obvious way this is illustrated in this passage is in the way Jesus says these words of comfort and hope. They are illusions to the Jewish wedding custom where a groom would go away for a year, prepare a home for his bride, and then – at a time known only to his father – would return to claim his bride and consummate the marriage.

**“How do we know the way?”**

- Peter is done asking questions. We don’t see him speak up again until John 18.
- Thomas, the Twin, the ‘doubter’ as he is often called, picks right up where Peter left off. Only his question is much more hopeless, much more despondent. “It is not a demand for information, but a gentle complaint against Jesus for expecting His disciples to be informed. It is not the expression of a desire for knowledge, but an excuse for ignorance.”

It’s almost as if Thomas is so overwhelmed by his own inability to find reason or logic in Jesus’ words that he is ready to give up.

**DEFINITION #6: A DISCIPLE IS ATTACHED TO GOD**

“The words "way," "truth," and "life" are all coordinate in Jesus' answer; Jesus described Himself as the way, the truth, and the life. The "way" is slightly more dominant in view of Thomas' question and its position in relation to the "truth" and the "life." Jesus is the way to God because He is the truth from God and the life from God. He is the truth because He embodies God’s supreme revelation (1:18; 5:19; 8:29). He is the life because He contains and imparts divine life (1:4; 5:26; 11:25; cf. 1 John 5:20).”

- “The statement ‘no one comes to the father . . .’ seems to relate primarily to the first predicate, ‘I am the way’. Thus we suggest that the two remaining predicates, truth & life, are explanatory to the first: ‘I am the way, that is, the truth and the life.’”

- Whatever be the preferable way of interpreting these words of our Lord, two

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9 Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Ethics.* p.23-24. I began reading this book after I started this study and his explanation of the fall here was so compelling in connection with our union/abiding with God, I had to include it. I haven’t finished it yet, but his answer to the question, “why didn’t God want us to eat from that tree?” is one that has been surprisingly helpful.

10 Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* p.392

11 Of course, we see later in John’s gospel that Thomas was very close to that point in not being with the other disciples when Jesus was risen 20:24. It’s not coincidence that Jesus’ indictment of Thomas in 20:29 is in close relationship with 14:1. We all must be careful of our own tendencies to be like Thomas when Jesus seems enigmatic or irrelevant to our present (and probably troubling) circumstances.

12 See also John 10:7-9; 8:31-32; 11:25

13 Constable, Thomas. *Notes on John,* 210

14 Harris, John. *Notes on John.*
things at least are clear from them. Jesus sets Himself forth there as all that man needs for eternal salvation, and as the only Savior. He is way, truth, life, everything; and He alone conducts to the Father."¹⁵

- **Our attachment is with the very person of Jesus – not just his ‘ways’, his ‘truths’ or knowing all about his life (nor my interpretations of them).** We must be united with him, we must abide in him – for there is no other way we can have reunion with God. I don’t have to know a way, like directions to a gas station, I only need to know Jesus who is the way. [Note also, there is nothing to be done apart from attachment to Jesus. Good works are a false way, self-righteousness can never find its way to the Father.]
  - Consider John 1:18: “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” Never in the Bible do you look upon God. Moses couldn’t. Isaiah trembled. The Holy of Holies was always behind a veil. But here Jesus says you have seen him.
  - “Since they had come to know who Jesus really was, they had come to know God. Their knowledge of God virtually amounted to seeing God. Since the Eleven had come to know who Jesus really was, they had assuredly come to know the Father as well.”¹⁶
  - “His word is not an abstract doctrine, but the re-creation of the whole life of man.”¹⁷

- If we know Jesus and the Father, then anyone who knows us should know Jesus and the Father as well. In Jesus’ absence (and our placing ourselves “in” him), we become a way to the Way: a Kingdom of Priests (Ex 19:6, Rev 1:6, 5:10), that the nations may know that our Lord is God (Ezek 36:23).
  - So, as ministers of the gospel, we must always remember that as we do our ministry, we must be about shepherding people to Jesus and not to ourselves.

**Tough Questions:**
1. How are we to use verse 6 in evangelism when it was spoken in privacy to Jesus’ closest followers? (especially when they had trouble understanding)
2. What is the difference between Peter & Judas?

**Practice Obedience This Week:**
1. Untrouble your heart.
2. Do not let it get troubled
3. Believe in Jesus (not in yourself)

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¹⁵ Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* p.395
¹⁶ Constable, Thomas. *Notes on John.* 211.
John 14:8-21:  **“Show us the Father”**

v.8-12  
- Philip cannot keep quiet after hearing Jesus’ answer to Thomas. “Seen the Father! Would it were so! Nothing would gratify me more: Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us.”
  - Phillip mistakenly thinks that “showing the Father is something Jesus does rather than something Jesus is.”
    - “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”
    - “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.”
  - We often want God to reveal and/or prove himself in obvious and spectacular ways. We’re not all that different from Philip. Our irony is the same as his. The revelation and proof we seek is sitting there talking to us. We were there when He healed the man with leprosy. We witnessed his confrontation with the Pharisees and Scribes. We have already received what we are asking for. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ (see again John 1:18)

**DEFINITION #7: A DISCIPLE’S WORDS & WORKS POINT TO THE FATHER**

“I am in the Father and the Father is in Me”

- This is another claim of Jesus to oneness with the Father – representing another claim to deity.
  - “The mutual abiding terminology that Jesus used expressed this unity without destroying the individual identities of the Father and the Son. Jesus did not just represent God to humankind as an ambassador would. He did everything the Father gave Him to do, and He did everything the Father did (5:19). Moreover ambassadors do not refer to those who send them as their father or claim that whoever has seen them has seen the one they represent. They do not affirm mutual indwelling with the one who sent them either.”
  - To put it another way, Jesus was never interrupted or corrected by the Father. His abiding in the Father was so complete – their oneness so full – that His thoughts were the Father’s and the Father’s, His. If that’s not a paradigm for what our relationship to Jesus ought to look like, then I don’t know what is.
  - The way Jesus lives his life illustrates who the Father is. So should our lives be not only for those whom we mentor/disciple, but also for our children and families.

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1 Bruce, A.B.  *The Training of the Twelve.* 398
2 Nelson, Tommy.  Sermon on John 14 #1046
3 Colossians 1:15-20
4 Colossians 2:8-10
5 cf. John 5:19; 8:28; 10:30, 38; 12:49
“Believe because of the works themselves.”

- “Both Jesus’ words and Jesus’ works are revelatory of who he is, but works have greater confirmatory power than words.”
- And what is our response to these words and works of Jesus? Why do they exist? They give us an opportunity to believe (cf. 14:1). Note that this is the only imperative in the chapter thus far. And because of the words and works of Jesus – we have little reason not to believe in him.
- Jesus asserts his union with the Father by pointing to how much He looks like His Father. Everything He has done is something not only the Father would have done, but in the same way the Father would have done it. “Like Father, like Son,” we say. For disciples of Jesus, we ought to look like our Rabbi. If someone doesn’t believe our words, then let them behold our works – our fruit – and that will demonstrate our true life.

**DEFINITION #8: A DISCIPLE IS NOT CONCERNED WITH ABILITY**

“Greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.”

- ...greater works than these he will do; because . . . we are highly trained?....really good looking?....such hard workers?.....know so many Bible verses by memory? No. Because He goes to the Father.
- How can we really do greater works than Jesus? I mean, he’s Jesus – that’s not possible is it? Not when you think of it the way Jesus is. Jesus is bringing glory to His Father because he has resigned himself to His will and is one with it. So much so that on the eve of his death, he’s not wringing his hands or worrying about what his last words are going to be – he’s washing the feet of a bunch of men who will desert him when He gets arrested. His aim is to raise up disciples that will have the same relationship with the Father. Here he begins to introduce how that is going to happen.
  - “When we examine the early chapters of Acts (2:41-46) we find that from a numerical standpoint, the works of Peter and the other Apostles surpassed those of Jesus in a single day (the day of Pentecost). On that day more were added to the church than had become followers of Jesus during the entire three years of his earthly ministry. It seems more probable that this is what Jesus meant by ‘greater works’ than that he referred to greater works in the sense of ‘more spectacular miracles.’”
  - Thus the works are greater in two ways:
    1. Greater in their effect: the disciples would actually participate in giving new life to souls – seeing people come out of the darkness and into the light (which was not possible until after Jesus’ resurrection).
    2. Greater in their extent: the disciples will minister not just in Jerusalem, not just in Judea or Samaria, but to the outermost parts of the earth. Jesus ministered in Galilee and Jerusalem. The disciples will cover the earth with their ministry – and do it all without him by their side.
- Yeah, but that’s for preachers, evangelists and missionaries. I’m nothing special. I’m never going to preach a sermon or translate the Bible into some obscure language. I’m not even good at studying the Bible or speaking in front of people. I can barely explain the gospel to a cabin of kids much less do things that I read about the Apostles doing in the Bible.
  - “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

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6 Harris, John. *Notes on John.*

7 It seems that much of what Jesus is teaching in chapter 14 is leading up to the climax of chapter 15 where Jesus spells out in a beautiful metaphor all that he has been illustrating to the disciples since the beginning of the discourse.

8 Harris, John. *Notes on John.*

9 Ephesians 2:10 – not to be considered without also reading verses 8&9.
What are the qualifications for these good works? 1). Jesus’ departure in going to the Father. 2). Belief in him. That’s it. The same thing that keeps my heart from being troubled is the same thing that enables me to do greater works than Jesus himself.

v.13-15 “Whatever you ask in My name . . . If you ask anything in My name...”

- This is how greater works are possible and how obedience will come so naturally.
- “And there is no one who gives himself really to live in the Name of Jesus, who does not receive in ever-increasing measure the spiritual capacity to ask and receive in that Name what he will. The bearing of the name of another supposes my having given up my own, and with it my own independent life; but then, as surely, my possession of all there is in the name I have taken instead of my own.”
- “Jesus means the promise literally. Christians have sought to limit it: it looked too free; it was hardly safe to trust man so unconditionally. We did not understand that the word ‘in my Name’ is its own safeguard. It is a spiritual power which no one can use further than he obtains the capacity for, by his living and acting in that Name.”
- Jesus’ words in Matthew 7 echo this same principle: If I am going to ask my Father for something I need, I don’t need to manipulate him – I just need to ask.
- “Johannine Theology has introduced into prayer in Jesus’ name an emphasis that goes beyond the use of a formula. A Christian prays in Jesus’ name in the sense that he is in union with Jesus. Thus, the theme of asking ‘in my name’ in v.13-14 continues and develops the indwelling motif of v.10-11: because the Christian is in union with Jesus and Jesus is in union with the Father, there can be no doubt that the Christian’s requests will be granted.”

DEFINITION #9: A DISCIPLE IS OBEDIENT

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

- “Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes.”
- In the previous section, Jesus told us that if we ask anything in his name, then he will do it for us. Our union with him should be that complete. It is not, however, just a one way street. If our union goes both ways, He should be able to ask anything of us and have us respond in complete obedience.
- These words never escaped John’s attention and his repetition of them in his later epistle reveal the importance of the concept:
  - “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”
  - “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.”
  - “We are not a group of people who have an orthodox body of truth that we simply confess to. We are not a people who merely acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We will treat him as such...and obey him.”

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10 Murray, Andrew. *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. Lesson 24. I would have quoted the entire chapter if I could have. You can download and read all of his books (as well as other Christian classics) at [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org)

11 ibid, lesson 24


13 Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*

14 1 John 2:3-6

15 1 John 5:2-3
It is easy for us to think from this straightforward commandment of Jesus that He is being passive aggressive with His disciples. We must not forget the context in which Jesus delivers his commandment. Bruce offers a helpful paraphrase:

- "If ye love me, show not your love by idle sorrow, but by keeping my commandments, whereby ye shall render to me a real service. Let the precepts which I have taught you from time to time be your concern, and be not troubled about yourselves. Leave your future in my hands; I will look after it: for I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter."  

Again we see the parallels between our relationship with Jesus and Jesus’ relationship with the Father. Jesus asserted that his words and works (his obedience) demonstrated his union with the Father. In much the same way, our obedience demonstrates our union with Jesus.

- It feels crude for obedience to be connected with love. It feels so unromantic and robotic. And, yet, in our culture we are quick to associate the two – but only in the negative. "If you really love me, you’d do such and such for me.”
  - The movie that illustrates a beautiful (and romantic) connection between love and obedience for me is *The Princess Bride*. In it a young man is completely in love with a beautiful girl. One of the ways he expresses his deep love for her is by answering, “as you wish” to whatever request she makes of him.
- I wonder if Jesus is still answering Phillip’s question here and turning it back around to him. He answered his question, but now, in making this commandment, is kinda saying to Phillip, “You show me the Father. You can do it just as much as I have – in some cases more because you are united with me and you have my help.”

**v.16-17 DEFINITION #10: A DISCIPLE HAS A HELPER**

“*He will give you another Helper that He may be with you forever*”

- ‘another’ is *allon* which means another of a same kind.18 A helper like Jesus.
  - Jesus also calls the Spirit a He. The Spirit is a person – not a force or idea – and is distinct from the Father and the Son, but also of a similar kind to the Son (who has just claimed to be one with the Father).
  - The entire Upper Room Discourse is saturated in passages that give us great understanding of the Spirit of God and the doctrine of the Trinity. Our study doesn’t have time or warrant detailed investigation, but these passages are essential to our right understanding of how God is one God, 3 persons (co-equal & co-eternal), each with subordinating roles.
- ‘helper’ is *parakletos* which, “in secular contexts, often referred to a legal assistant, an advocate, or simply a helper (e.g., a witness or a representative in court). The verbal form of this word, *parakaleo*, literally means to call alongside and, therefore, to encourage or to strengthen."19
- Jesus promises the disciples that he is going to prepare a place for them. In the meantime, He is also providing them with help until he returns to get them. He is giving them a Helper who will be a permanent presence of help in their lives and give them supernatural ability to love and obey beyond their “normal” capacity.

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16 Nelson, Tommy.
17 Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve*. 387.
18 Constable, Thomas. *John*. 214
19 Ibid. 214.
“You know Him because He abides with you and will be in you”

- ‘know’ is the same word that Jesus has used in speaking with Thomas and Phillip about Himself. We will know the Spirit just as Jesus knows the Father and as we know the Son (..who knows the Father . . .etc,etc). The full picture of union continues to come into focus.
- ‘abides’ is the same word (mone) Jesus used in 14:2 to describe the ‘dwelling places’ in his Father’s house. The same connotations of permanence that were present there are also present here.
- Why do we need the help of the Spirit of Truth?
  - Because we are of the same breed as the Nation of Israel was in the Hebrew Scriptures. We know the truth, but we struggle to obey. In fact, the disobedience had become such a problem, God made a covenant with them where he said, “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”
  - Jesus commands us to keep his commandments – and he will make sure that is entirely possible for us. The Spirit won’t just hover over our shoulder and whisper in our ear what we ought to do. No. He will mone within us as a sanctuary and transform our hearts from the inside out.
  - What commandments will he help us keep? Specifically the new one Jesus has given us. How else could we love others the same way he loves us without His help?

v.18-21  “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

- “Jesus has spoken in 14:3 of going away and coming again to his disciples. Here it is probable that the post-resurrection appearances are probably in view, but many commentators have taken verse 18 a reference to the coming of the Spirit. It may be well that another Johannine double meaning is to be found here, so that it is true that Jesus ‘returns’ to his disciples in one sense in that he appeared to them after his resurrection, but in another sense he ‘returns’ in the person of the Holy Spirit to indwell them.”

A good summary: “There’s going to be a group of people on the earth who believe in the person of Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life. He is going to save them, prepare a place and come back and get them. But while those people are here, they’re going to be a unique people in all of the world by their piety, by their love and by their obedience. And God will dwell on the earth in the presence of those people and glorify himself. They will not only believe in him, but they will have an experience with him and the experience will be quantified by truth.”

Tough Questions:
1. If Jesus is “in” the Father, then why/how is He ‘going’ to Him?
2. Is the indwelling of the Spirit for all Christians or only to those who ‘receive the blessing’?

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20 Ezekiel 36:26-27. See also Jeremiah 31:31-34.
21 Harris, John. Notes on John.
22 Nelson, Tommy. Sermon on John 14. #1049
The Upper Room Discourse  
**Week 6: John 14:22-31**

**John 14:22-31:**

v.22-24  “What has happened that You disclose yourself to us and not to the world?”

- “There were two members of the Twelve named Judas. The one who voiced this question was Judas the son or brother of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). He is probably the same man as Thaddaeus (cf. Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19).”\(^1\)
- “We should probably take this as an indication that the disciples, on the night before the crucifixion, still did not understand what lay ahead, and were expecting Jesus to reveal himself to the nation and the world as Messiah.”\(^2\)

**DEFINITION #11: A DISCIPLE EXPERIENCES THE LOVE OF GOD**

“If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”

- God will love the obedient person and we will experience that love and learn more of who God is in our lives. You can learn of him by obedience or you can learn of him by disobedience (consider Psalm 25). It is a remote answer to Judas’ question, but it still answers it. His revelation is available to anyone, but it will not come as Judas supposed it would. It would come through the cross – not just for Jesus, but for all who would follow Him.
- Much has been written and said about what it means/how to ‘experience God.’\(^3\) Jesus’ words here prove to be more meaningful on the subject than a thousand volumes. The only key to experiencing God is obedience. That’s it. It’s not in a second baptism, it’s not in extra tithes, it’s not even found in a worship service.
  - “For this reason I bow my knees before the **Father**. . .that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his **Spirit** in your inner being,(John 14:16-26) so that **Christ** may dwell in your hearts through faith (John 14:23)--that you, being rooted and grounded in love (John 14:14), may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know (John 14:9, same word) the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”\(^4\)
- God has always made his dwelling place with His people. Always. He did it in the garden. He did it with Israel. He does it now with us. He will dwell with us face to face at the end of all things.
  - “For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’”\(^5\)
  - “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”\(^6\)
  - “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.’”\(^7\)
- This is ultimately the answer to Judas’ question. Jesus will reveal himself to the entire world, but it will not necessarily be a corporeal disclosure. Jesus will

\(^1\) Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.* 216.
\(^2\) Harris, John. *Notes on John.*
\(^3\) Tom Nelson’s sermon on this subject was most helpful in seeing this connection. #1050
\(^4\) Ephesians 3:14-21
\(^5\) 2 Corinthians 6:16, but it’s really Paul quoting Exodus 29:45, 25:8, &Leviticus 26:12
\(^6\) 1 Peter 2:4-5
\(^7\) Revelation 21:3
disclose himself through His people who function as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Therefore, we must be obedient.

v.25-26  **“He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said.”**

- “The Spirit would teach them all things, which in the context refers to all things that were presently obscure, about which the various disciples kept raising questions (13:36; 14:5, 8, 22). He would do this partially by bringing to their memories things that Jesus had said that would become clear in the light of His "glorification" (cf. 2:19-22; 12:16; 20:9).”
  - And in our remembering, what are we to do? Obey.

- How can we follow or do ministry without the Spirit? He has given us a Helper that will make our obedience not just possible, but also effective!

v.27-29  **DEFINITION #12: A DISCIPLE HAS PEACE AND DOES NOT FEAR.**

*“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you”*

- "'Peace' (Gr. eirene, Heb. shalom) was a customary word of greeting and farewell among the Jews.”

- Peace is one of the most important concepts in all of the Scripture and is of supreme importance to the believer (consider Numbers 6:24-26). Peace is the inheritance for all who have come to love the Prince of Peace. It has at least four dimensions:
  - The first dimension of peace is that of relationship. He brings us peace because he reconciles us with God and brings us into right relationship with him. We were his enemies and Jesus’ work on our behalf has transformed us from enemies of God to his very place of dwelling.
    - “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”
  
    - “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

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8 1 Peter 2:9
9 Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.*
10 Ibid. 219. Specifically, see John 20:19, 21, 26.
11 Romans 5:1-5 – see also through verse 11
12 Ephesians 2:14-22 – see also Colossians 1:20
The second dimension of peace is the feeling that comes from a restored relationship. It is a tremendous source of comfort and hope for those who have been reconciled with God.

- "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."\textsuperscript{13}
- "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."\textsuperscript{14}
- "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."\textsuperscript{15}

The third dimension of peace is that it must be bestowed. Those who do not have peace cannot discover, buy, fabricate, find or achieve it. It must be given by someone who can offer it. The only reason we can have peace is because grace has been extended to us. Again, consider Numbers 6:24-26

- The language Jesus is using here is that of a last will and testament. Peace is what he is bequeathing to his followers – but it can only become theirs if two things are true. First, they have to have a right relationship with him as heirs. Second, they cannot receive their inheritance until the benefactor dies.
- "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."\textsuperscript{16}
- "And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace."\textsuperscript{17}

The fourth dimension of peace is that it is nothing like the peace the world offers us. The peace of Christ is a permanent abiding peace whereas the peace of the world is circumstantial and subjective at best. The peace of Christ is an intelligent peace (it can stare harsh reality in the face and not be intimidated by it) whereas the peace of the world is a stupid peace ("...ignorance is bliss"). And, finally, the peace of Christ comes from union with the actual person of Jesus and the peace of the world comes only from verbal declaration and/or mental assent (i.e. if I keep telling myself I have peace, I will).

"Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

- "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!"\textsuperscript{18}
- We have heard this before in 14:1. Consider all that Jesus has promised to his disciples in lieu of their trouble (just in chapter 14!):
  - He is going to prepare a place for us in his Father’s house
  - I will come again and receive you to myself (says this twice)
  - They will do greater works than Jesus himself
  - Ask anything in my name and he will do it

\textsuperscript{13} Colossians 3:15
\textsuperscript{14} Philippians 4:6-7.
\textsuperscript{15} Isaiah 26:3
\textsuperscript{16} Romans 15:13
\textsuperscript{17} Micah 5:4-5
\textsuperscript{18} Luke 12:4-5
\textsuperscript{19} Constable, Tom. \textit{Notes on John}. 219.
\textsuperscript{20} ibid. 219
He will give us another helper who will be with us and in us
He discloses himself to us
He makes his abode with us
He gives us his peace

“You would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for He is greater than I.”
- My departure shouldn’t trouble you – it should bring you great joy. You may not have understood it a moment ago, but now that I have explained it to you – do not despair in my departure. You have peace, you have a Helper, you will do greater things than I have done. You have everything you need.
- Although it is not the major purpose of our study, it will serve us well to have some basic Trinitarian 101 points stated here since this verse – more than any other – brings some questions about the Trinity itself. The basics can be summed up in 5 statements of truth about God:
  1. God is one God.
  2. God is three distinct persons
  3. The persons are co-equal and co-eternal
  4. The persons have subordinating roles
     - Role of the Father = WILL
     - Role of the Son = MEDIATION
     - Role of the Spirit = ILLUMINATION/REVELATION
  5. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God.
- “It should be obvious by now that Jesus did not mean that He was less than God or an inferior god when He said that God was greater than He was. Jesus was not speaking ontologically (i.e., dealing with essential being) since He had affirmed repeatedly that He and the Father were one ontologically (1:1-2; 10:30; 14:9; 20:28). Rather He was speaking of the Father’s glory. Jesus had laid His heavenly glory aside in the Incarnation, but the Father had not done so and consequently enjoyed greater glory than the Son during Jesus’ earthly ministry. However now Jesus was about to return to the Father and the greater glory that He would again share with the Father. This glorification should have caused the disciples to rejoice, but they sorrowed instead because they focused on themselves too much.”
  - Jehovah’s Witnesses and other Arians take this verse to mean that Jesus is less than God or a lesser creation of God. For more information on how to answer a JW’s claims about this verse, www.probe.org has excellent resources. (Arius was a heretic in the early church who denied Jesus’ full deity.)

“So that when it happens, you may believe.”
- We’ve gotten the idea in this chapter that we’re supposed to believe, huh? The word is repeated six times in this chapter alone. Lest we forget, this is the reason John writes this Gospel – 20:31.

v.30-31 “The ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in me”
- “Let him come; I am ready for him. He has indeed nothing in me; no claim upon me; no power over me; no fault which he can charge against me. Nevertheless, I yield myself up to his hands, that all men may see that all men may see that I love the Father, and am loyal to His will: that I am ready to die
for truth, for righteousness, for the unrighteous."

“So that the world may know that I love the Father. . .”

- Again, love produces obedience.
  - “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
  - “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
  - “That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.”

- What if you loved God with the same love Jesus has for the Father? What in your life would change? What wouldn’t?

“Get up, let us go from here.”

- Some commentators think that the disciples didn’t get up and leave at this point because of what John 18:1 says. Whether chapters 15-17 happen in the Upper Room or en route to Gethsemane matters little.

Tough Questions:
1. True or False: Love is more a choice than a feeling.
   a. If it’s a choice, what are you choosing when you say, “I love you”?
   b. If it’s a feeling, what does it feel like?
2. Is fear a sin? What is the opposite of fear? What is the source of fear?

Practice Obedience: 1. Obey Exodus 20:9-10 so that all may know you love the Father

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21 Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve*. His paraphrase of verse 30.
22 Philippians 2:8
23 Galatians 2:20
24 Philippians 3:10-12
The Upper Room Discourse
Week 7: John 15:1-10

John 15:1-10:

In my searching for books on the Upper Room Discourse I, unfortunately, could find no singular volume that was devoted to John 13-17. However, there were numerous articles, books, even entire ministries that are based just on John 15. It is, indeed, and important text and an excellent metaphor – but we must remember that John 15 gains so much of its meaning from the previous two chapters. It is the climax of Jesus teaching to the disciples, but if we skip all that has led us to this point, we run the risk of misunderstanding all that Jesus has to teach us here.

There is another aspect of this chapter that is important to remember. As Westerners our greatest desire is to quantify this metaphor and make it ‘do-able.’ Thus, we spend large amounts of time figuring out which branches are which, how to abide better, and how to achieve higher fruit bearing. Jesus taught in an Eastern culture – one that was far more concrete than abstract. The first half of John 15 serves as an excellent, concrete description of what Jesus has been teaching in John 13 & 14. Thus, we may have to, disappointingly, settle for the fact that there are no hidden or special formulas here. No gimmicks. Just a simple illustration.

In fact, as a metaphor, this is not a new one. Jesus often used the image of a grapevine to describe the nation of Israel (see Matt. 20:1-16; 21:23-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 13:6-9; 20:9-16). It was also an image used in the Hebrew Scriptures as well (see Ps. 89:9-16; Isa. 5:1-7; 27:2; Jer. 2:21; 12:10; Ezek. 15:1-8; 17:1-21; 19:10-14; Hos. 10:1-2). We should also remember that the first charge God gave to mankind was to “be fruitful and multiply,” so we shouldn’t assume that this is a new role Jesus is wanting his followers to assume. He has desired fruit from us from the very beginning.

v.1-3

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."

- This is the final “I am” statement of Jesus recorded in John’s Gospel. As we read this section, it will be important to note the importance of all the identity statements in this first half of the chapter.
- It could be possible that "Jesus is saying that whereas the vine was a picture of Israel in the Old Testament, He is the fullest realization of Israel’s hope, of their expectations, of what God intended to be as her Messiah. Israel, as a vine, was an utter failure; it never achieved its goal. Our Lord Jesus Christ who came as the True Vine would accomplish all Israel failed to do."  
- "Jesus was the vine of God’s planting. All that Christ is and has, He has not in himself, but from the Father. At the very root of all Christian life lies the thought that God is to do all, that our one work is to give and leave ourselves in His hands, in the confession of utter helplessness and dependence, in the assured confidence that He gives all we need."

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away”

- For more detailed notes, see verse 6.
- “Fruit is the one thing the branch is for, and if it bear not fruit, the husbandman takes it away. The vine is the glory of the husbandman; the branch is the glory of the vine; the fruit is the glory of the branch; if the branch bring not forth fruit, there is no glory or worth in it; it is an offense and a hindrance; the husbandman takes it away. The one reason for the existence of a branch, the one mark of being a true branch of the heavenly Vine, the one condition of being allowed by the divine husbandman to share the life of the Vine is bearing fruit.”

“and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes so that it may bear more fruit”

- ‘prune’ is kathario which means to cleanse or purify. There are things within a

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1 Deffinbaugh, Bob. *Aiding in Christ.
3 ibid.
branch that need to be trimmed or cut off completely to help the branch bear much fruit. That process is the 'purifying' of the branch – also known as pruning. It's not done once, it's done repeatedly on the same branch season after season.

- “Let us believe that as the owner of a vine does everything to make the fruitage as rich and as large as possible, the divine husbandman will do all that is needed to make us bear more fruit. All He asks is, that we set our heart desire on it, entrust ourselves to His working and care, and joyfully look to Him to do His perfect work in us. God has set His heart on more fruit; Christ waits to work it in us; let us joyfully look up to our divine Husbandman and our heavenly Vine, to ensure our bearing more fruit.”

  - Even in the midst of bearing fruit, the Vinedresser is looking for more. His outlook is always future maturity and capacity. The more mature we grow in the Lord, the higher capacity we have for fruit bearing. I may bear 20 grapes when I’m a young believer and God is pleased with it. He also knows I am capable of bearing 500. He’s going to make sure I reach that potential.

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

- ‘clean’ is the word katharos and has the same root as the word for ‘to prune’.
- This should trigger our memory back to 13:10. At that point there were some who were clean and one who was not. Here, all are clean. This could be an assurance to the disciples that none of them are going to be 'taken away’. This insinuates that the branches who are ‘taken away’ are not clean. The only person who wasn’t clean in 13:10 was Judas.
- Note also what makes them clean here. In 13:10, cleanliness was related to washing. Here it’s related to the hearing of the word. This makes my mind go immediately to Eph 5:26 – but it might not be an appropriate connection.

DEFINITION #13: A DISCIPLE ABIDES IN CHRIST

“Abide in me, and I in you...”

- Notice this is the only command for the branch. Jesus doesn’t command us to bear fruit. He says that’s what we’re designed for and what God expects of us – but he never commands it of us. He only commands us to abide. Why?
  - He has already told us that the Vinedresser will prune us so that we bear much fruit.
  - No one ever heard of a branch every trying to produce its own fruit. It just does. Grapes are the natural result of what it is. As long as the connection is maintained, fruit will come.

- "The branch is like the vine in every aspect. . .the same nature, the same life, the same place, the same work. In all this they are inseparably one. And so the believer needs to know that he is partaker of the divine nature, and has the very nature and spirit of Christ in him, and that his one calling is to yield himself to a perfect conformity to Christ. The branch is a perfect likeness of the vine; the only difference is, the one is great and strong, and the source of the strength, the other little and feeble, ever needing and receiving strength. Even so the believer is, and is to be, the perfect likeness of Christ.”

- Abiding in our relationship with Jesus is simple – not complex. No formulas, no gimmicks, no schemes. Abiding is simply trust & obedience.

“he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

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4 ibid.
5 The means of that process, though, will not always be pleasant. Pruning never feels good. Consider Hebrews 12:1-13. We all like verses 1-3, but we don’t consider why those 3 verses are there. They are exhortations to abide while being pruned.
6 Ibid.
The branch has no life of its own. The life it has comes only from the vine. It shares the life of the vine and it expresses the life of the vine in the fruit that it bears.

"One's initial impression is to interpret the imagery in terms of good deeds or character qualities, relating it to passages elsewhere in the NT like Matt 3:8, 7:20, Rom 6:22, Gal 5:22, etc. This is not necessarily inaccurate, but we must remember that for John, to have life at all is to bear fruit, while one who does not bear fruit shows that he does not have the life (conduct is the clue to paternity, as in 8:41; compare also 1 Jn 4:20)."

"And what is fruit? Something that the branch bears, not for itself, buy for its owner; something that is to be gathered, and taken away. The branch does indeed receive from the vine sap for its own life, by which it grows thicker and stronger. But this supply for its own maintenance is entirely subordinate to its fulfillment of the purpose of its existence...bearing fruit."

"Let us specially beware of one great mistake. Many Christians think their own salvation is the first thing; their temporal life and prosperity, with the care of their family, the second; and what of time and interest is left may be devoted to fruitbearing, to the saving of men."

"He is thrown away as a branch and dries up...and they are burned"  

Much is written and said about the meaning of this verse in this metaphor. The most popular views are these:

1. The word “takes away” in v.2 can be rendered 'lifted up' or ‘take away.’ One view supposes that this is the 'lifting up' of the vine up off the ground so that it will be healthier and not grow its own roots and ruin its fruit. (Wilkinson takes this view in his book The Secrets of the Vine.)

2. Others believe that these branches who are taken away are believers who forfeit their salvation because they did not bear fruit.

3. Still others suggest that verses 2 and 6 refer to an unfaithful or disobedient believer who is judged at the judgment seat of Christ ‘through fire’ (1 Cor 3:11-15) and their removal may even be their physical death.

4. The last major view holds that the unfruitful branch is a person who was never a genuine believer (like Judas for example).

   Option 1: is very possible, but the meaning of the word ‘remove’ (rather than ‘lift up’) in v.2 does seem more natural and less forced – particularly in light of verse 6 where the same worthless branches are described as being 'cast out' – an image that seems incompatible with restoration.

   Option 2: encounters problems with the Johannine teaching on the security of the believer, especially 10:28-29.

   Option 3: is very possible as well, but the concept of the judgment of believers is not a concept that appears in John’s Gospel because from his perspective, the believer does not come under judgment (3:18, 5:24, 5:29). Furthermore the imagery of being cast into the fire constitutes a reference to eternal judgment – see Matt 3:10. The branch who has not remained is Judas. He did not bear fruit and is now in the realm of darkness, a mere tool of Satan. His eternal destiny, being cast into the fire of eternal judgment, is still to come.

   Option 4: Thus, the favored view is that the branches who do not bear fruit and are taken away and burned are not genuine believers. They are those who profess some sort of allegiance to Jesus but who in reality do not belong to him. In the Gospel of John, the primary category is Judas. In 1 John 2:18-19 the

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7 Harris, John. Notes on John.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 There are several commentaries that were helpful on this point. Harris’ summarized all of them well and was the most brief in doing so, hence I have selected his commentary for the entirety of this verse (unless otherwise noted).
‘antichrists’ fall into the same category; they too may be thought of as branches that did not bear fruit. They departed from the ranks of the Christians because they never did really belong, and their departure shows that they did not belong.

- Another way of saying it is that there is no other option for the branch. If it does not bear fruit, then it ceases to be a branch. Just as salt cannot lose its savor – neither can the branch not bear fruit. It is either not a branch or it is not attached to the vine. In either case, it is not in union with Jesus.
- If you go to a nursery to buy a tree and you see one that doesn’t have leaves or flowers on it – you wouldn’t buy it. It’s obviously dead. No matter what the owner may claim about the status of that tree – that tree is dead. There is no evidence of life in the tree. No fruit. So, what carries more weight: the claim or the fruit?11

v.7-8  “Ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you”

- These words should make our minds think back to 14:13-14. The same unity that Jesus was expressing about his relationship with the Father and the expression of his will is the same union we have with Jesus when we abide in Him and He in us.

**DEFINITION #14: A DISCIPLE BEARS MUCH FRUIT**

“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

- “Bearing fruit and being Jesus’ disciple are not two different actions, but a single action. The first is the outward sign or proof of the second – in bearing fruit the disciples show themselves to be disciples indeed.”12
- By producing the same type of fruit (obedience) that Jesus produced during his earthly ministry, the disciples prove their union with the True Vine because of two reasons: 1. They have a relationship with him (abiding) and 2. they look like their Rabbi (fruit).
- What does your fruit prove about the vine you are attached to? Is it the True Vine? Anything other than the true vine will yield natural fruit instead of spiritual fruit. Natural fruit is no fruit at all.

v.9-10  “Abide in my love”

- For a child to have an abiding relationship with their parent, do they need to be perfect? What would be the only reason the child would be ‘taken away’? If he/she spurned the love of the parents & disobeyed their wishes – extremely. The parent will forever long for the child to return and abide in the love they long to give the child – but until the child submits his/her will to the parents and obeys, there can be no abiding relationship. Consider what we discussed in John 13:8-11: “unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”
- John re-emphasises this point in 1 John 4:12-16.

**Tough Question:**

1. It sounds like Jesus is kind of back loading the Gospel with works, doesn’t it? How is it possible to be saved by grace through faith if I have to bear fruit? Because if I don’t bear fruit, then I am not abiding, and if I’m not abiding, then I can’t prove myself to be a disciple, and if I can’t do that, then I’m taken away and burned like Judas. That can’t be right. Can you explain it to me in a way that makes more sense?

**Practice Obedience this Week:** 1. Choose to do something with Christ that you otherwise would have done without him.

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11 Nelson, Tommy. Sermon Illustration from sermon #1090.
12 Harris, John. *Notes on John*
ONLY A BRANCH

“Tis only a little Branch,
A thing so fragile and weak,
But that little Branch hath a message true
To give, could it only speak.
“I’m only a little Branch,
I live by a life not mine,
For the sap that flows through my tendrils small
Is the life-blood of the Vine.
“No power indeed have I
The fruit of myself to bear,
But since I’m part of the living Vine,
Its fruitfulness I share.
“Dost thou ask how I abide?
How this life I can maintain?–
I am bound to the Vine by life’s strong band,
And I only need remain.
“Where first my life was given,
In the spot where I am set,
Upborne and upheld as the days go by,
By the stem which bears me yet.
“I fear not the days to come,
I dwell not upon the past,
As moment by moment I draw a life,
Which for evermore shall last.
“I bask in the sun’s bright beams,
Which with sweetness fills my fruit,
Yet I own not the clusters hanging there,
For they all come from the root.”
A life which is not my own,
But another’s life in me:
This, this is the message the Branch would speak,
A message to thee and me.
Oh, struggle not to “abide,”
Nor labor to “bring forth fruit,”
But let Jesus unite thee to Himself,
As the Vine Branch to the root.
So simple, so deep, so strong
That union with Him shall be:
His life shall forever replace thine own,
And His love shall flow through thee.
For His Spirit’s fruit is love,
And love shall thy life become,
And for evermore on His heart of love
Thy spirit shall have her home.

-Freda Hanbury as quoted in Murray’s The True Vine.
John 15:11-27:

**DEFINITION #15: A DISCIPLE IS FULL OF JOY**

“So that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full”

- Some basic observations about the joy of the disciple:
  - Joy is received – it is not found within.
  - Joy is not circumstantial – it, like peace, abides within us.
- What is Christ’s joy?
  - “There is no joy but love. Christ had just spoken of the Father’s love and His own abiding in it, and of His having loved us with that same love. His joy is nothing but the joy of love, of being loved and of loving.”¹
- Jesus’ words in 1-10 make our joy full on multiple levels:
  - Joy in Perspective: Bearing fruit is now a cooperative effort – not something that is up to my own performance or ability. Thus, whether I bear fruit or am being pruned – I know the ultimate purpose and trust the hands of the vinedresser. No more performance anxiety!
  - Joy in Practice: I legitimately feel joyful when I do things that bring God pleasure. The more I obey, the closer I feel to Jesus. The closer I feel to Jesus, the more I probably look like him.
  - Joy in Petition: I bring my requests to God not because I have to, but because I can and because if I ask it will be done for me! I don’t have to manipulate or conjure up God’s blessing – I already have his favor. All I need to do is ask!
  - Joy in Patience: I realize that I’m not the only one in charge of my fruit-bearing or of my growth. Thus, I recognize that the process will be one that lasts and that will ultimately result in much glory for the Father.
- Ours is a world in which joy is found in freedom, independence and control. To the degree that you possess all those things, you have joy. Jesus, on the other hand, is describing a joy that comes from submission and obedience. The more you resign your life over to the Vine, the happier you are. This is counterintuitive to our culture and, as Jesus will soon tell his disciples, fosters the opposite feeling from the world: hatred.

**DEFINITION #16: A DISCIPLE IS NOT A SLAVE**

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends”

- The supreme gift one human being can give to another is his or her life. Nothing surpasses it, nothing even comes close. It is the ultimate expression of love – one that Jesus is foreshadowing here for his disciples. One that John did not quickly forget:
  - “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”²
  - “He gave His life for us in death not merely as a passing act, that when accomplished was done with; no, but as a making Himself ours for eternity. Life for life; He gave His life for us to possess that we might give our life for Him to possess.”³

¹ Murray, Andrew. *The True Vine.* 27.
² 1 John 3:14-18
³ Murray, Andrew. *The True Vine.* 30
Through His Helper, we are opened up to a new capacity for love that the world knows nothing about. Even if we do not get the opportunity to give up our physical lives for another, the sacrifices we make for those whom we love will demonstrate that we are willing. This we could not do apart from the vine. There is no possible way we could love to this breadth, length, height and depth.

“You are my friends . . . no longer do I call you slaves”

- “The slave is no more than an instrument. It is not for him to enter intelligently into the purposes of his owner. His task is simply to do what he is told. But this is not the pattern of relationship between Jesus and his disciples. He has called them ‘friends.’ He has kept nothing back from them. He has revealed to them all that the Father has made known to him.”
  - "Truly a marvelous statement! Seeing we cannot serve the Lord but by doing His commandments, how is it that in doing so we shall cease to be servants? If I be not a servant in doing His commandments, and yet cannot be in His service unless I so do, then, in my very service, I am no longer a servant.”

- Our friendship is also conditional on our obedience (just as our abiding and love are also conditioned on our obedience). Thus, obedience cannot be underscored enough – it is the key to friendship with God!
  - “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
  - “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”
  - “We have not considered implicit obedience as a condition of true discipleship. The secret thought that it is impossible to do the things He commands us, and that therefore it cannot be expected of us, and a subtle and unconscious feeling that sinning is a necessity have frequently robbed both precepts and promises of their power.”

- Jesus proves his love for us in that he actually lays down his life for us – just as he foreshadows here. We may feel love for Christ (and others) and even speak of our love for Christ (and others), but until that love manifests itself in choice (even to choose to die) – it is still in question. See what our friend has done for us? What does it say about our friendship towards him if our commitment isn’t the same?

- We should also notice that the love that can cause us to lay down our lives is the same love that can transform our relationships with people. Love like Jesus’ can make a slave into a best friend. Jesus’ love for us has made us friends of God! We who were once hostile to God and his enemies – we are declared his friends!

v.16-17 “You did not choose me but I chose you . . . that your fruit would remain”

- Don’t let your heads run off to the election/free-will debate here (yet). Jesus is speaking literally. He chose each of these disciples individually. He found them on by the sea or collecting taxes and said, “Follow Me.” It’s important to understand that this was unusual for a Rabbi to do in Jesus’ day. Most young men would find a rabbi they wanted to be like and ask him if they could follow. The rabbi would then test the potential student to see if he could bear his
Only the best of the best students approached rabbi’s hoping to be selected. If they weren’t the best of the best, then they would live the rest of their days carrying out the trade craft of their family – like being a fisherman.

So, what did it mean for Jesus to select disciples who weren’t the best of the best? Two things: 1). He believed they could follow him. 2). Their ability/performance wasn’t up to them – it was up to their attachment with Jesus. Being the best is not a pre-requisite when you’re following someone who can transform you from the inside out.

- "God doesn’t call the qualified, he qualifies the called."¹²
- "The evidence of true sonship, discipleship, and friendship is fruit. ‘Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them’ (Matt 7:20). Where there is true fruit, it remains; man-made ‘results’ eventually disappear. Fruit has in it the seed for more fruit, so the process goes on and on. Whatever is born of the Spirit of God has the mark of eternity upon it, and it will last.”¹³

**v.18-20 DEFINITION #17: A DISCIPLE IS HATED BY THE WORLD**

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you"

- It makes sense for Jesus to transition to this topic because he’s already defined the relationships of the disciples to himself, the Father and with one another. They need to know how they are supposed to relate to the world – especially since one cannot be friends with the world and with Jesus.¹⁴
  - "Hatred is very hard to bear, and the desire to escape it is one main cause of unfaithfulness and unfruitfulness. Good men shape their conduct so as to keep out of trouble, and through excess of cowardly prudence degenerate into spiritual nonentities. It was of the first importance that the apostles of the Christian faith should not become impotent through this cause."¹⁵
  - Thus, hatred is not to be feared by disciples of Jesus – nor should it be any kind of surprise to them. Peter learned this lesson well and made sure his disciples did too: 1 Peter 4:12-19.

- It’s also worth noting that the fruit produced by Jesus and his followers is love – and the fruit of the world is hatred.

**DEFINITION #18: A DISCIPLE IS IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST**

"I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you"

- "Men love those who hold the same opinions, occupy the same position, follow the same fashions, pursue the same ends with themselves; and they regard all who differ from them in these respects with indifference, dislike, or positive animosity, according to the degree in which they are made sensible of the contrast. Hence arises a dilemma for the chosen ones. Either they must forfeit the honor, privileges, and hope of their election, and descend into the dark world which is without God and without hope; or they must be content, while retaining their position as called out of darkness, to accept the drawbacks which adhere to it, and to be hated by those who love the darkness rather than the light, because their life is evil. What true child of light will hesitate in his choice?"¹⁶
  - Rejection by the world (because of you choosing God) is inevitable. Is there a Biblical character that you can think of that didn’t experience this

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¹² Unknown.
¹³ Wiersbe, Warren. *Be Transformed.* 48
¹⁴ Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.* 230
¹⁵ Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* 290
¹⁶ Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* 291
Joseph was rejected by his own family, Moses was rejected by Pharaoh and the Israelites, David was rejected by Saul and Absolom, the disciples were rejected by the world – all of them martyred, Paul was rejected by just about everybody – also martyred.

Why should we suppose that rejection won’t find us? Why do we live to avoid it so? Rejection will prove where your true friendship lies. It is here that we must remember 15:5 as well. Only in our abiding in Jesus and His faithful Helper could we ever begin to say:

“"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.””

“"If our Christianity has ceased to be serious about discipleship, if we have watered down the gospel into emotional uplift which makes no costly demands and which fails to distinguish between natural and Christian existence, then we cannot help regarding the cross as an ordinary, everyday calamity, as one of the trials and tribulations of life. We have forgotten that the cross means rejection and shame as well as suffering.””

“"They do not know the One who sent me”

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

Notice again the disqualification is know. Our attachment to the vine remains the most important aspect of our relationship with Jesus.

“The world, against whose hatred their Master forewarns them in this part of His discourse, is not the irreligious, skeptical, easy-going, gross-living world of paganism. It is the world of antichristian Judaism; of synagogue-frequenting men, accustomed to distinguish themselves from “the world” as the people of God, very zealous after a fashion for God’s glory, fanatically in earnest in their religious opinions and practices, utterly intolerant of dissent, relentlessly excommunicating all who deviated from established belief by a hair’s-breadth, and deeming their death no murder, but a religious service, an acceptable sacrifice to the Almighty. The pagan world despised them rather than hated them. The Greek laughed, and the Roman passed by in contemptuous indifferrence, or at most opposed temperately, as one who would rather not. But the persevering, implacable, malignant hostility of the Jewish religionist! — it was bloodthirsty, it was pitiless, it was worthy of Satan himself. Truly might Jesus say to the Jews, with reference thereto, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”

“If I had not spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin”

“Jesus is not saying that if he had not come and spoke to these people they
would be sinless; rather he is saying that if he had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of the sin of rejecting him and the Father he came to reveal. Rejecting Jesus is the one ultimate sin for which there can be no forgiveness, because the one who has committed this sin has at the same time rejected the only cure that exists.\(^{21}\)

v.24-25 **“They have both seen and hated Me and My Father”**

- Even in seeing Jesus – and all of his miraculous works and words – they didn’t just ignore Him, they didn’t just put him off as some crazy – they hated him and, subsequently, the Father as well. Why? Because the world refuses to admit its sin:
  - "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ."\(^{22}\)

**“They hated me without a cause” (Psalm 35:19, 69:4, 109:3)**

- “All the suggested passages speak of hatred that lacks any reasonable foundation. It is this kind of hatred that the Jews had exercised toward Jesus. There is more Joannine irony here. The Jews saw themselves as the upholders of the Law, but in their zeal for the Law they incurred the condemnation of the Law by rejecting the Christ to whom the Law bore its witness.”\(^{23}\)

v.26-27 **DEFINITION #19: A DISCIPLE TESTIFIES ABOUT JESUS TO A WORLD THAT HATES HIM/HER**

- **“When the Helper comes... He will testify about me, and you will also”**
  - This Helper is the key to our ministry. Jesus will explain and expound further in chapter 16 on this point. As mentioned above, He helps us to understand the things freely given us by God. And our testimony is Jesus and him alone. He may give us our best life now, but He must remain the central core to our message.
    - John’s Gospel is, in essence, his testimony of Jesus “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31)
    - This is the message of the Book of Acts as well:
      - “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)
      - “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”\(^{24}\)
    - “The apostles are linked closely with the Spirit in this activity of witness (cf. Acts 4:33). Their witness is linked with that of the Holy Spirit. It is the same Christ to whom they bear witness, and it is the same salvation of which they bear witness. At the same time it is their witness. They cannot simply relax and leave it all to the Spirit. They have a particular function in bearing witness in that they were with Jesus from the very beginning. There is a responsibility

\(^{21}\) Harris, John. *Notes on John.*  
\(^{22}\) 1 Corinthians 2:12-16  
\(^{24}\) Acts 4:12
resting on all Christians to bear witness to the facts of saving grace. They cannot evade this.”

**Tough Questions:** 1. Explain how joy is possible in submission and obedience. Is it possible to have joy in freedom, independence and control? 2. How can people who live in a world that is hostile towards God come to believe in Him?

**Practice Obedience this Week:** 1. Love someone.

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25 Ibid.
John 16:1-15:

**DEFINITION #20: A DISCIPLE HAS REASON TO BE COURAGEOUS**

_v.1-4_ **These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling**

- Even though we’re beginning a new chapter, Jesus is still on the same topic and will continue through verse 4.
- Augustine is right to point out Peter here. We may have the words of Christ and understand all that He is teaching us, but without the indwelling testimony of the Holy Spirit within us, we are bound to deny Christ – three times even.
  - “But when he [Peter] really received the gift of the Holy Spirit, he preached Him whom he had denied; and whom he had been afraid to confess, he had no fear now in openly proclaiming. Already, indeed, had he been sufficiently taught by example to know what was proper to be done; but not yet was he inspired with the power to do what he knew: he had got instruction to stand, but not the strength to keep him from falling. But after this was supplied by the Holy Spirit, he preached Christ even to the death, whom, in his fear of death, he had previously denied.”

- Amazing when you consider what Peter writes in 1Peter 1:3-9.
  - “All the disciples are fully informed as to what discipleship really means; all of its hard and painful features are fully disclosed – no trap is laid for them.”
  - “stumbling” is skandalizo, which means to be caught unaware, trap, or cause to fall away. Jesus doesn’t want the disciples to be caught off guard and feel like they were tricked – and thus – turn away from following Jesus. They have everything they need to persevere under trial. See also 1 Peter 4:12-19.
  - “The memory that Jesus had forewarned His disciples would enable them to realize that things were not out of control when they seemed to be. This remembrance would really strengthen their faith in Jesus rather than weakening it.”

- “They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.”
  - “It is almost certain that Jesus has in mind Jewish opposition here.” Thus, this is somewhat of a foretelling of the utter rejection of the Nation of Israel of her own Messiah. Not just a, “No, Thanks”, but the very chosen people of God rejecting the One God has chosen to be their redeemer.
  - Let us pray that we never become so blinded by our own conceptions of God and religion that we would do the same.

- “Jesus looks forward to a time when people’s values will be so perverted that anyone who kills his followers will think he is serving God. It is not persecution by a secular state that is in mind, but that set in train by religious authorities. It is the tragedy of religious people that they so often regard persecution as in line with the will of God.”

- A servant is not above his master – if they kill Jesus, they will kill the disciples as well (and for the same reasons). But this thought is not to deter the disciples or to make them cower. He tells them this so that “when their hour comes” they may persevere as Jesus does – even to the point of death.

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2 Lenski, quoted in Morris, 614.
3 Constable, Tom. *Notes on John*. 234
4 Harris, John. He suggests that in both cases (putting out of synagogues and putting to death) are from Jewish opposition. See Acts 7:58-60 (stoning of Stephen) and 12:2-3 (slaying of James) for the most immediate examples.
5 How many examples of this can you think of? The Crusades, Hitler’s genocide of the Jews, the KKK, the list goes on…
o See Hebrews 11:35-38
o Notice also that Jesus assumes these men will be in the synagogues and then be cast out of them. His departure will give them reason and power to testify about Him – but to no avail (see also Isaiah 6:10-11)

“**These things I did not say at the beginning, because I was with you**”

- The natural question for the disciples at this point would be, “Why didn’t you tell us about our glorious fate sooner, Jesus?” And his response is simple enough. His presence with them was protection for them. As long as He was still on the earth, all the persecution would be directed towards him. But now that he’s leaving, the world will turn its eye towards the disciples themselves.
- This opens the door for the stumbling that Jesus speaks of in verse 1. Our falling away from following Jesus doesn’t have to be dramatic or even scandalous. When pressured on who we are and what we believe by a hostile and merciless world, we might easily be tempted to make ourselves look more like the world around us rather than stick our necks out even further. Thus, we should be somewhat weary of the world’s approval of anything we do.
  - “It’s hard to believe that a cause is truly God’s when it seems to meet with no success, and all power is on the other side.”

v.5-7

“**None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’**”

- “‘Why,’ He means to say, ‘are you so utterly cast down? have you no questions to ask me about my departure? You were full of questions at the first. You were curious to know whither I was going. I would be thankful to have that question asked over again, or indeed to have any question put to me, whether wise or foolish. The most childish interrogations would be better than the gloom of speechless despair.’”
  - Look where we have come since chapter 13. Eagerness to follow and be at the right hand of Jesus has turned into silence, despair and disillusionment. What should we learn from this when our own circumstances mirror those of the disciples here?
  - Notice their excitement and their sorrow is self-centered. In neither instance are they thinking of Jesus, their Lord and Teacher’s fate – only their own. Perhaps this is key to avoiding a similar attitude in our own lives.
  - C.S. Lewis has written a masterful book called *The Screwtape Letters*. In it, he presents an idea that relates to this topic. See the end of this lesson for a copy of that letter.

“**It is to your advantage that I go away**”

- “They must have seen Jesus’ talk of departure as a disaster for themselves, and this added to their grief at the thought of persecution.” Especially if they thought he was about to inaugurate himself as King of Israel.
- “The world has rejected me and my words; and you, though sincere, are very ignorant, and understand not what I have taught you. After my ascension, there will be a great alteration in both respects: the world will be more ready to hear the truth, and you will be able to declare it intelligently. The change cannot come till then; for it will be brought about by the work of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, and He cannot come till I go.”

v.8-11

“**He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment**”

- “We have seen that the word translated ‘Counselor’ is a word with legal

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6 Temple, quoted in Morris, 614.
7 Bruce, A.B. *Training of the Twelve*. 295
8 Harris, John. *Notes on John.*
9 Bruce, A.B. *Training of the Twelve*. 296. Bruce’s paraphrase of Christ’s words.
implications. Normally it denotes a person whose activities are in favor of the defendant, but here the meaning is that the Spirit will act as prosecutor and bring about the world’s conviction\(^{10}\) – not so that the world will be condemned, though. But so that in light of seeing their guilty state, they may come to repentance.\(^{11}\)

- **Sin (because they do not believe in me):**
  - The world did not believe and would not believe. How else could any come to believe on Jesus Christ were it not for this prosecuting work of the Paraclete? (See Rom 3:11)
  - The Spirit can convict of general sins, but cleaning up one’s life does not give them eternal life. They must repent of the damning sin of rejecting Christ (3:18, 36).\(^{12}\)
  - “The Spirit would not just accuse people of sin, but would bring an inescapable sense of guilt before God upon them (cf. 2 Sam. 12:7; Ps. 51:4). This sense of guilt is an indispensable prerequisite for salvation.”\(^{13}\)

- **Righteousness (because I go to the Father and you no longer see me):**
  - “The Spirit shows people (and no one else can do this) that righteousness is not the acquiring of merit that they think it is; righteousness before God depends not on their own efforts but on Christ’s atoning work for them.”\(^{14}\)
    - When you think of it, it is an amazing thing that men should put their trust for all eternity in a crucified Jewish criminal. What convinces men that this crucified Jew is the Son of God? *That is the work of the Holy Spirit.* It is the Holy Spirit who convinces men of the sheer righteousness of Christ.\(^{15}\)
  - The Paraclete must continue this ministry of Christ after His departure otherwise none would be capable of coming to this realization.

- **Judgment (because the ruler of this world has been judged):**
  - Ultimately, the judgment of the world about Christ (thinking him to be a false Messiah) would be proven incorrect – leading to their own judgment for doing so.
  - Ironically, the judgment that the world executed upon the true Messiah was the judgment that condemned Satan (and his schemes) to eternal destruction as well. If the ruler of the world (Satan) already stands condemned, then no less can be expected of those who are under his influence.
    - “When a lost sinner is truly under conviction, he will see the folly and evil of unbelief; he will confess that he does not measure up to the righteousness of Christ; and he will realize that he is under condemnation because he belongs to the world and the devil (Eph. 2:1-3). . . . There can be no conversion without conviction, and there can be no conviction apart from the Spirit of God using the Word of God and the witness of the child of God.”\(^{16}\)

v.12-15 **DEFINITION #21: A DISCIPLE IS GUIDED INTO TRUTH**

“He will guide you into all the truth. . . .and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

- In verses 8-11 we see the Holy Spirit’s role in the world, here we transition to seeing what role He will play in the lives of the disciples in 12-15.

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\(^{11}\) Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.* 235. An important idea when you consider how Christians often convict the world. Typically their conviction of the world is for their destruction – not their repentance.

\(^{12}\) Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.* 236

\(^{13}\) Constable, Tom. *Notes on John 235.*

\(^{14}\) Morris, Leon. *Gospel According to John.* 620

\(^{15}\) Barclay, Wm. As quoted in Morris.

\(^{16}\) Wiersbe, Warren. *Commentary on John.* 1:362
Truth is exclusive. It is an essential quality of truth that it be exclusive or else it is no longer the truth, but a truth. We enter into it – we do not possess it like a trophy. We must bend ourselves to the truth for it is unbendable because truth is a Person. This truth sets us free from a world of narcissistic self-indulgence and makes communion possible – not just between God and man – but also between men.

Here is the creed for the modern thinker: We believe in Marx, Frued, and Darwin. We believe everything is okay as long as you don’t hurt anyone to the best of your definition of hurt and to the best of your definition of knowledge. We believe that everything’s getting better despite evidence to the contrary. The evidence must be investigated and you can prove anything with evidence. We believe there’s something in horoscopes, UFO’s and bent spoons. Jesus was a good man just like Buddha, Mohammed and ourselves. He was a good moral teacher although we think basically his good morals were really bad. We believe that all religions are basically the same, at least the ones that we read were, they all believe in love and goodness; they only differ on matters of creation, sin, heaven, hell, God and salvation. We believe that after death comes nothing because when you ask the dead what happens they say nothing. If death is not the end and the dead have lied, then it’s compulsory heaven for all except perhaps Hitler, Stalin and Genghis Kahn. We believe that man is essentially good, it’s only his behavior that lets him down. This is the fault of society, society is the fault of conditions, and conditions are the fault of society. We believe that each man must find the truth that is right for him and reality will adapt accordingly: the universe will readjust, history will alter. We believe that there is no absolute truth except the truth that there is no absolute truth. We believe in the rejection of creeds and the flowering of individual thought. . . .If chance be the father of all flesh, disaster is his rainbow in the sky. And when you hear “state of emergency,” “sniper kills 10,” “troops on rampage,” “youths go looting,” “bomb blasts school;” it is but the sound of man worshipping his maker.”17

This statement is applicable only in part to us as believers – for Jesus spoke it to his apostles through whom He was about to author the Holy Scriptures and provide revelation of Himself to the entire world for all eternity. The Holy Spirit will still guide us into all the truth – but not in the same way he guided the apostles to pen the Scriptures.

“He will glorify me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you”

“Jesus never acted on His own initiative but only in obedience to the Father. The Spirit who would reveal the truth would do the same. This description implies the Spirit’s complete equality with Jesus in the Godhead. The Spirit would not give revelation that conflicted with what Jesus had taught. The source of both the Son’s and the Spirit’s teaching was the Father.”18

Not only is this good teaching on the Holy Trinity – it also is a good model for us to embody as well. We should act – not on our own initiative, but in obedience to the Father – to the praise of His glory.

This comes into view most realistically for Paul when he admonishes the Corinthians about the wisdom of men and the power of God: “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural

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17 Turner, Steve. An English journalist quoted by Ravi Zacharias
18 Constable, Tom. Notes on John. 237
19 1 Corinthians 2: 14-16. The entire chapter applies.
person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.\textsuperscript{19}

**Tough Questions:**
1. Why was it better for the disciples to have the presence of the Paraclete rather than the presence of Jesus himself?

**Practice Obedience this Week:**
1. There are no imperatives in the text this week. Nevertheless, in a spirit of obedience, practice following the guidance of the Holy Spirit this week. Be listening and ready to obey.
MY DEAR WORMWOOD,

So you "have great hopes that the patient's religious phase is dying away", have you? I always thought the Training College had gone to pieces since they put old Slubgob at the head of it, and now I am sure. Has no one ever told you about the law of Undulation?

Humans are amphibians—half spirit and half animal. (The Enemy's determination to produce such a revolting hybrid was one of the things that determined Our Father to withdraw his support from Him.) As spirits they belong to the eternal world, but as animals they inhabit time. This means that while their spirit can be directed to an eternal object, their bodies, passions, and imaginations are in continual change, for to be in time means to change. Their nearest approach to constancy, therefore, is undulation—the repeated return to a level from which they repeatedly fall back, a series of troughs and peaks. If you had watched your patient carefully you would have seen this undulation in every department of his life—his interest in his work, his affection for his friends, his physical appetites, all go up and down. As long as he lives on earth periods of emotional and bodily richness and liveliness will alternate with periods of numbness and poverty. The dryness and dullness through which your patient is now going are not, as you fondly suppose, your workmanship; they are merely a natural phenomenon which will do us no good unless you make a good use of it.

To decide what the best use of it is, you must ask what use the Enemy wants to make of it, and then do the opposite. Now it may surprise you to learn that in His efforts to get permanent possession of a soul, He relies on the troughs even more than on the peaks; some of His special favorites have gone through longer and deeper troughs than anyone else. The reason is this. To us a human is primarily good; our aim is the absorption of its will into ours, the increase of our own area of selfhood at its expense. But the obedience which the Enemy demands of men is quite a different thing. One must face the fact that all the talk about His love for men, and His service being perfect freedom, is not (as one would gladly believe) mere propaganda, but an appalling truth. He really does want to fill the universe with a lot of loathsome little replicas of Himself—creatures, whose life, on its miniature scale, will be qualitatively like His own, not because He has absorbed them but because their wills freely conform to His. We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons. We want to suck in, He wants to give out. We are empty and would be filled; He is full and flows over. Our war aim is a world in which Our Father Below has drawn all other beings into himself: the Enemy wants a world full of beings united to Him but still distinct.

And that is where the troughs come in. You must have often wondered why the Enemy does not make more use of His power to be sensibly present to human souls in any degree He chooses and at any moment. But you now see that the Irresistible and the Indisputable are the two weapons which the very nature of His scheme forbids Him to use. Merely to over-ride a human will (as His felt presence in any but the faintest and most mitigated degree would certainly do) would be for Him useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo. For His ignoble idea is to eat the cake and have it; the creatures are to be one with Him, but yet themselves; merely to cancel them, or assimilate them, will not serve. He is prepared to do a little overriding at the beginning. He will set them off with communications of His presence which, though faint, seem great to them, with emotional sweetness, and easy conquest over temptation. But He never allows this state of affairs to last long. Sooner or later He withdraws, if not in fact, at least from their conscious experience, all those supports and incentives. He leaves the creature to stand up on its own legs—to carry out from the will alone duties which have lost all relish. It is during such trough periods, much more than during the peak periods, that it is growing into the sort of creature He wants it to be. Hence the prayers offered in the state of dryness are those which please Him best. We can drag our patients along by continual tempting, because we design them only for the table, and the more their will is interfered with the better. He cannot "tempt" to virtue as we do to vice. He wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away His hand; and if only the will to walk is really there He is pleased even with their stumbles. Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger, than when a human, no longer desiring, but intending, to do Our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.

But of course the troughs afford opportunities to our side also. Next week I will give you some hints on how to exploit them.

Your affectionate uncle,    SCREWTAPE
John 16:16-33:

**DEFINITION #22: A DISCIPLE HAS ABIDING JOY THAT ALTERS PERSPECTIVE**

**“You will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.”**

- The little while is Jesus’ immanent crucifixion. And they will see Him again after his resurrection and before his ascension.
- “The disciples appear not to have understood the majority of what Jesus had said. The statements which have caused them the most difficulty were in verse 16 and verse 10. These appear to be mutually exclusive: how can Jesus say that he will disappear for a while and then reappear, and on the other hand say he is going to the Father and thus they will see him no more?”
  - “In effect, what He has said is: ‘It is good for you that I go, for not till I become invisible physically, shall I be visible to you spiritually: I must be withdrawn from the eye of your flesh, before I can be seen by the eye of your mind.’”

**“You will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned to joy.”**

- Jesus answers their bewilderment, but, again, not with the answer they seek. Instead answering their questions about time, he addresses their emotions about this confusing departure.
- Just before this supper the disciples were arguing with each other about which would be at his right hand and which would be at his left. Jesus places a totally different reality before them – and there is little argument now about who gets to follow in Jesus’ footsteps first.
- Their following isn’t hopeless. ‘Though weeping may last for the night, joy comes with the morning.’ (Ps 30:5). This theme permeates all of the life of Jesus Christ who sets foot on earth to go directly towards the cross.
  - Women go willingly into pregnancy – they even dream about the opportunity and look forward to the day when they get to have their own child. One of the most painful experiences known to mankind is sought after by most women – and they know going into it how painful it will be for them. Why, then, are we so unwilling to devote ourselves fully to Jesus and, in obedience, follow him into a world where we will be hated and even killed for who we are?
  - “Christianity has not so much tried and found wanting, as it has been found difficult and left untried.”

**“I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.”**

- “The idea of permanence attached to the disciples’ joy at this point suggests more than just their joy in recognizing that Jesus has overcome death itself. They will also experience the permanent presence of the Paraclete as a result of Jesus’ departure.”
- This reminds us of the fullness of joy we will experience when we abide in Christ that is, obviously, not circumstantial and not residing within us.

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1 Harris, John. *Notes on John*
2 Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve*
3 Chesterton, G.K.
4 Harris, John. *Notes on John.*
DEFINITION #23  A DISCIPLE FULLY TRUSTS HIS MASTER

“In that day, you will not question me about anything.”

- “They will have no need to ask him anything any more, because the Paraclete will be residing in them permanently, and he will give the disciples full understanding.”
- The disciples’ questions of Jesus throughout their 3 years with him were replete with ignorance. With the presence of the Spirit, their questions would turn from those of a distrusting child into an adult who fully understands what is at hand and at stake.
- Just because we will have insight from the Spirit doesn’t mean we won’t have questions. Even the most mature believer experiences bewilderment and even doubt at certain circumstances. However, the presence of the Spirit and our maturity in Christ will lead us to a place where we no longer ask those questions because we need reason to trust our Rabbi.
  - That is real trust. A trust that will obey – no questions asked. Abraham carried his promised son up on a mountain to offer him up as a sacrifice because God asked him to do it. Abraham did it – no questions asked - just like Job. This is a definition of discipleship that tests the depth of our attachment to Jesus.

“Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”

- See also 1 John 5:14-15
- That same trust spills over and doesn’t just keep us from questioning the will of our God. In fact, it encourages us to ask for more! Because of the work of Jesus Christ we have been given unparalleled access to God. If we trust his response before it is even given, why don’t we ask? And when he does answer – what kind of joy must that be?
- Our lack of asking God is directly related to our trust in him. Our attempts to provide for ourselves find us out all too often – and leave us empty handed and depressed.
  - “But, strange paradox, most of us are plagued with a subtle aversion to praying. We do not naturally delight in drawing near to God. We pay lip service to the delight and potency and value of prayer. We assert that it is an indispensable adjunct of mature spiritual life. We know that it is constantly enjoined and exemplified in the Scriptures. But in spite of it all, we fail to pray.”

“I have spoken to you in figurative language . . . I will tell you plainly”

- “Jesus acknowledged that He had not been giving direct answers to His disciples’ questions. He had been speaking enigmatically or cryptically. The Greek phrase en paroimias has this meaning elsewhere (cf. 10:6). Jesus was referring to His entire discourse, not just His illustration about the woman (v. 21). He evidently did this to avoid presenting what lay ahead in such stark reality that the disciples could not accept it (v. 12).”
- Jesus will speak to them plainly because their spiritual maturing process will continue even in his absence. Jesus implies that they will, at some point, be able to handle what he cannot reveal to them now. And this maturing process will happen apart from his presence as their Rabbi.
  - Whether it is our capacity to understand that grows or Jesus words that become more simple – if we continue to abide in Him, we will have all the answers we need and want to be able to do His work in the world.

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5 Harris, John. *Notes on John.*
7 Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.*
We should also note that the disciples were called to follow him without much clarity. So much of what we try to achieve today in this world is a movement towards guaranteeing success (in our own minds). “If the decision were only more clear, then I would know what to do.” To some degree, Jesus tells the disciples to be fine with not knowing because they have trust in Him (which far supersedes any knowledge we could obtain).

“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.”

- “Here we have the great movement of salvation. It is a twofold movement, from heaven to earth and back again. Christ’s heavenly origin is important, else he would not be our Savior. But his heavenly destination is also important, for it witnesses to the Father’s seal on the Son’s saving work.”
- Jesus’ mission and purpose guided him through all that he did during his earthly ministry. Nothing he did was without intention or without the Father’s will in mind. He glided effortlessly through crowds that wanted to see him dead. He stood down the religious leaders of his day and called them children of the devil. He healed the sick, lame and unclean. He taught with authority. He called the whole world to repentance. A singular focus and a singular devotion can be a powerful force. We are confronted with so many different reasons for existing. What if we had only one mission that all the rest of our life fell under?

v.29-32

DEFINITION #24: A DISCIPLE’S BELIEF WILL BE TESTED BY THE WORLD

“Now we know you know all things . . . by this we believe you came from God”

- “These last words of Jesus burst on the disciples like a star suddenly shining out from the clouds in a dark night. At length one luminous utterance had pierced through the haze of their Master’s mysterious discourse, and they fancied that now at last they understood its import. Jesus had just told them that He came forth from the Father into the world. That, at least, they understood; it was because they believed it that they had become disciples. Delighted to have heard something to which they could give a hearty response, they make the most of it, and inform their Master that the intelligible, plain speaking on His part, and the intelligent apprehending on theirs which He had projected into the future, were already in existence.”
  - “There is probably more of John’s irony here. Had the disciples really possessed the understanding they claim, they would have reacted very differently when the crisis came.” (i.e. they wouldn’t have deserted their Rabbi as they all did) This, implicitly, says something about the belief they profess to have – which Jesus immediately points out to them.

“Do you now believe?”

- Jesus re-uses the world ‘believe’ absolutely – whereas the disciples said they believe that . . . In remembering John’s use of the word ‘believe’ from the introduction, we must think that Jesus is questioning not their intellectual assent to the truth He has just spoken – but their willingness to act on it. Talking and walking are both part of believing. Or, in Pine Cove terminology: Prove It! 😊
  - “Jesus is not expressing doubt about the reality of the disciples’ faith, but directing attention to its inadequacy. Thy do believe. But they do not, as yet, know the quality of the faith that stands firm in the face of difficulty and danger.”

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9 Bruce, A.B. The Training of the Twelve. 304
“An hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered. . .”

- “The proof of Jesus’ evaluation of the disciples’ faith is now given: Jesus foretells their abandonment of him at his arrest, trials, and crucifixion.”
- The word for scattering (skorpizo) isn’t a passive one. It carries meaning of flying away or running in every direction in terror. It’s not that something else scattered the disciples, they scattered themselves.

**DEFINITION #25: DISCIPLE HAS PEACE THAT ENCOURAGES PERSEVERANCE**

“So that in Me you may have peace.”

- “All must live in the world and thus have trouble. But people may also live in Christ, and when they do they have peace.”
- Notice that it does not say the disciples will have “a” peace. They will have peace. It is not something that comes and goes. It is like the sap from a vine to a branch. Running through the branch this peace will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus from the anxiety of the persecutions of this hostile world – all the while producing endurance, character, and hope.
- Amazing what the security of peace can afford those who believe. They had no reason to doubt it either. They watched their savior march to the cross with more peace than the world has ever known – and it gave that world great hope.

“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

- “This statement, spoken as it is in the shadow of the cross, is audacious. The cross would seem to the outsider to be Jesus’ total defeat. He sees it as his complete victory over all that the world is and can do to him. He goes to the cross not in fear or in gloom, but as a conqueror.”
- Recall John 1:5: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” Thus, if we abide in this same light we shall overcome as well. Why? Because the branch produces the fruit of the vine (not the branch). The only condition is our remaining, abiding, believing in the Vine. Therein also flows our courage. His peace flows into our branch followed quickly by his power and courage to remain and entrust our lives to the Vinedresser.
  - “Let us therefore look up to Him as our Head in all things: as our King, and lay down the weapons of our rebellion; as our Priest, and receive from Him the pardon of our sins; as our Lord, to be ruled by His will, defended by His might, and guided by His grace. If we do this, the accuser of the brethren will have no chance of prevailing against us. The words of St. John in the Apocalypse will be fulfilled in our history: “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

Philippians 2:1-11 describes our Savior, his Love for the Father and for humanity and, subsequently, his obedient service to us – which brought both Him and God the Father great glory. Consider verses 12 & 13 in light of all that Jesus has taught his disciples in this discourse with regard to love, obedience, abiding, believing, persecution, perseverance and the glory of God:

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

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11 Harris, John. *Notes on John.* See also Zech 13:7
12 Thayer’s Greek Dictionary
14 See Philippians 4 and Romans 5
16 Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* 307.
All The Way My Savior Leads Me

All the way my Savior leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my Guide?
Heav’nly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate’er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well;
All the way my Savior leads me,
Cheers each winding path I tread;
Gives me grace for every trial,
Feeds me with the living Bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
And my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! A spring of joy I see.
All the way my Savior leads me
O the fullness of His love!
Perfect rest to me is promised
In my Father’s house above.
When my spirit, clothed immortal,
Wings its flight to realms of day
This my song through endless ages—
Jesus led me all the way.  

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17 Crosby, Fanny. All the Way My Savior Leads Me
The Upper Room Discourse
Week 11: John 17

John 17:

“The literary genre of the Last Discourse appears to be organized after the pattern of a farewell speech, and it was not uncommon for farewell speeches to include closing prayers. Deuteronomy, for example, contains both a prayer in chapter 32 and a blessing of the people in ch 33.”¹

This prayer has many titles. Some have called it the High Priestly Prayer, others call it the Prayer of Consecration and there are some who call it the True Lord’s Prayer. Whatever the title we attribute to it, none of them can contain all of the richness found in these words of Jesus.

There are a few things that make John 17 unique. First, it’s the longest prayer that Jesus prays. Secondly, his prayer has been overheard. He’s not speaking to the disciples nor is he instructing them. This is just between Jesus and the Father. Finally, it marks the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry. His words are few from this point until his death.

The chapter has 3 parts: 1-5 are Jesus’ prayers for himself, 6-19 are Jesus’ prayers for his disciples, and 20-24 are his prayers for all believers.

v.1-5

“The hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You”

- “Thou knowest, Father, how patiently I have waited for what I now ask, not wearying in well-doing, nor shrinking from the hardships of my earthly lot. Now that my work is finished, grant me the desire of my heart, and take me to be with Thyself.”²
  - Recall 2:4, 12:23, 27
  - “The inevitability of an impending event did not lead Jesus simply to accept it fatalistically. This is how some believers respond in similar situations. Instead it moved Him to petition the Father that what was coming would result in God’s glory.”³
- Just as Jesus told the disciples in chapter 16 that it would be better for them if He left and went to the Father, the same applies here. Jesus will bring more Glory to God the Father if He returns to heaven.

“This is eternal life, that they may know you . . .”

- “It is not just unending life in the sense of prolonged duration. Rather it is a quality of life, with its qualitativeness derived from a relationship with God. The statement here in 17:3 enables us to correlate the statement made in 1:18 of the Prologue, that Jesus has fully revealed what God is like, with Jesus’ statement in 10:10 that he has come that people might have life, and have it abundantly. These two purposes are really one because (abundant) eternal life is defined as knowing (being in relationship with) the Father and the Son. The only way to gain this eternal life, that is, to obtain this knowledge of the Father, is through the Son. For John, this knowledge is not intellectual, but relational.”⁴
  - “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”⁵

DEFINITION # 26  A DISCIPLE LIVES OUT HIS/HER DESIGN

“I glorified you on the earth, having accomplished the work...”

- The most stunning and compelling facet of Jesus prayer for himself is the evidence of his own calling and mission. It is completely clear that Jesus knows exactly what the Father has called him to do and it brings him great joy by

¹ Harris, John. Notes on John.
² Bruce, A.B. The Training of the Twelve. 308
⁴ Harris, John. Notes on John.
⁵ 1 John 5:11-12
fulfilling that role in his obedience to the Father’s will.

- Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” We also have been created for the Father’s will and he has given us work to accomplish while on this earth. When we walk in those works, it brings our Father great glory because our design reflects His craftsmanship.

- Many of us are waiting to ‘figure out’ what God’s design or purpose is for us in this life. Although this process can be a difficult one, it’s not a matter of our own choosing. It only comes through a resignation of our lives to the Father’s. Murray’s words here are helpful:

  “This life of entire self-abnegation, of absolute submission and dependence upon the Father’s will, Christ found to be one of perfect peace and joy. He lost nothing by giving all to God. God honored His trust, and did all for Him, and then exalted Him to His own right hand in glory. And because Christ had thus humbled Himself before God, and God was ever before Him, He found it possible to humble Himself before men too, and to be the Servant of all. His humility was simply the surrender of Himself to God, to allow Him to do in Him what He pleased, whatever men around might say of Him, or do to Him.

  It is in this state of mind, in this spirit and disposition, that the redemption of Christ has its virtue and efficacy. It is to bring us to this disposition that we are made partakers of Christ. This is the true self-denial to which our Savior calls us, the acknowledgment that self has nothing good in it, except as an empty vessel which God must fill, and that its claim to be or do anything may not for a moment be allowed. It is in this, above and before everything, in which the conformity to Jesus consists, the being and doing nothing of ourselves, that God may be all.”

- A good illustration of this kind of this reality can be found in one who serves in a branch of our armed forces – the Army for example. Once someone enlists in the Army he is, essentially, killing himself. His will cannot live once he is in the Army. He must always submit his will to that of his commanding officers – even if they command him to go into a place that will lead him to his death. The more he allows his will to pass away and the will of his officers and unit to take over – the better soldier he becomes. It will be easier for him to understand his role in the unit, and, thus, bring great honor to his country.

- Once we get to this point of humility with ourselves and our relationship with Jesus, then we will find our design and our purpose become much more clear because all of the others have been stripped away. We must be careful that they do not reappear in our lives – lest we come to our final hour having forgotten what we were designed for.

**A RABBI’S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES:**

**DEFINITION #27: A DISCIPLE REVEALS THE NAME OF GOD**

“I have manifested Your name to the men You gave Me out of the world...”

- Manifested is the word *phaneroo*. It means “to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way.”

- Jesus has fully revealed who God is and what He is like (His name) through his words and his works. He is the image of the invisible God. He doesn’t just know what the Father knows – he looks just like the Father.

- Our opportunity is the same as Jesus’ was to His disciples. They were unaware

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6 Murray, Andrew, *Humility*. Ch 2.
7 Thayer’s Greek Dictionary
of all the truth that was theirs to behold until Jesus represented it to them in bodily form – in every aspect of his life. Such is our opportunity with our disciples and our children. How will you manifest the Living God to people God entrusts to you so that they may believe in Jesus as the Son of God and have life in His name? Would you be able to say this on the eve of your death?

“Keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as we are.”

- It is important that Jesus confesses here that being kept is entirely a matter left to the character and nature of the God he has just manifested to the disciples. He is asking the Father to keep them – not the disciples to keep themselves.
  - “It is Thy business, Thy interest, to keep these men. They are Thine; Thou gavest them me: keep Thine own. Then I am glorified in them: my cause, my name, my doctrine, are to be henceforth identified with them; and if they miscarry, my interest will be shipwrecked. Therefore, as Thou values the honor of Thy Son, keep these men.”

- “The ultimate end of God keeping these disciples loyal to the revelation that Jesus had given them was that they might experience unity. They would be one with one another as well as one with the Son and the Father if they remained loyal to Jesus’ revelations.”

- “The unity prayed for is a unity already given: Jesus does not pray that they may ‘become’ one, but that they may ‘continually be’ one. The unity for which Jesus prays is a unity that rests on a common basic attitude, that of abiding in him and having him abide in them.” It is doubtful that Jesus has an ecumenical agenda here, but something much more difficult: a unity of heart, mind and will. That is a much grander unity than one united denomination.

“I do not ask you to take them out of the world...keep them from the evil one.”

- John reminds us in 1 John 5:19 that this world lies under the power of the evil one. We shouldn’t feel at home here – we are subjects in an evil regime that we were born into, but have yet to escape. And escape is not our goal. We must liberate our people from his tyranny at whatever cost.
  - The disciples have a task to do in the world (just as Jesus did), thus it is vastly important for them to be in the world. However, it is equally important that they should be kept from evil for it is fatal to the carrying out of their task.

- “Throughout church history Christians have sought relief from the world’s hatred by withdrawing from it socially, and in other ways, or by compromising with it. Some individuals tend to withdraw from a disagreeable and dangerous environment while others prefer to blend into it. Jesus’ will, however, was that His disciples should do neither of these things. He wanted them to remain loyal to God while continuing to participate in the amoral aspects of its life. Our sense of mission and our sense of identity should control our desire for comfort.” (see 17:1-2)

**DEFINITION #28: A DISCIPLE IS DEPENDANT UPON TRUTH**

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”

- Sanctify is hagiazo and means “to set apart for God’s service.” Jesus is the perfect example of a sanctified person. He devoted himself completely and

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8 Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* 312-313.
9 Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.* 246-247
11 Morris, Leon. *Gospel According to John* 646
12 Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.* 248
13 Constable, Tom. *Notes on John.* 248
15 Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* 315.
consistently to God’s will for Him.”

- “To know the truth is not to enter intellectual freedom as such, but it is to enter into the liberating experience of being disciples of the Lord, with all that that means in terms of freedom from sin and guilt, and of fellowship with the knowledge of God. Jesus is not describing truth as an ethical virtue or philosophical concept. Truth is a quality of action, not simply an abstract concept.”

- We should notice that a disciple’s relationship to the truth is also to be “in” it. The disciple is never the source of truth. In much the same way we have life is much the same way we have truth. Truth is a person – not an idea. Truth was made flesh and dwelt among us. So, our only hope for being kept from the evil one is our life “in” Jesus and our remaining “in” His truth.

- “Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.” -Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, Inc.

**DEFINITION #29: A DISCIPLE IS A ‘SENT ONE’**

“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

- Jesus speaks here like a parent who lives for the sake of His children, having a regard to their moral training in all His personal habits, denying Himself pleasures for their benefit, and making it His chief end and care to form their characters, perfect their education, and fit them for the duties of the position which they are destined to fill.”

- Disciples are always sent. They never send themselves. This is just as true of Jesus as it is of us.

- Thus, when we come to the end of our lives, our prayer should be the same as Christ’s here – or similar at least. That we have so well understood his mission and lived obediently to His will that we would ask that in our departure he would receive glory and those disciples of ours that remain would continue the legacy that we first received from Christ.

**DEFINITION #30: A DISCIPLE DEMONSTRATES UNITY IN COMMUNITY**

“That they may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

- The beauty of the United States is that it is a union of sovereign states. Those states are separate from one another and have borders and boundaries. What is legal in one state may not be in another. Yet, they have one sovereign government over them all.

- Obviously the metaphor breaks down, but the idea of a multi-faceted union is a more helpful way of looking at the ecumenical movement than trying to enforce one denominational conglomerate. Just as there are many branches in one Vine – there still remains one Vinedresser.

- “These two things, truth and love, Jesus asks for his own, as of a vital moment: truth as the badge of distinction between His Church and the world; love as the bond which unites believers of the truth into a holy brotherhood of witness-bearers to the truth. These two things the Church should ever keep in view as of co-ordinate importance: not sacrificing love to truth, dividing those who should be one by insisting on too minute and detailed a testimony; nor sacrificing truth to love, making the Church a very broad, comprehensive society, but a society without a vocation, having no truth to guard and teach, or testimony to bear.”

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16 Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve.* 313.
In Conclusion:
"The life Christ imparts is His own life, the spirit He breathes is His very own Spirit, the one disposition He works is His own self-sacrificing love. It lies in the very nature of His salvation that every member of His body, in full and healthy access with Him feels himself urged to impart what he has received. The command is no arbitrary law from without. It is simply the revelation, for our intelligent and voluntary consent, of the wonderful truth that we are His body, that we now occupy His place on earth, and that His will and love now carry out through us the work He began, and that now in His stead we live to seek the Father’s glory."\(^{17}\)

"We become a life student of Jesus by deciding. When we have achieved clarity on ‘the costs’ – on what is gained and what is lost by becoming or failing to become his apprentice – an effective decision is then possible. But still it must be made. It will not just happen. \textit{We do not drift into discipleship.}\(^{18}\)

So, only one tough question remains: Are you a disciple?
- (It will be important to remember here that the 30 definitions presented here are not qualifications for becoming a disciple. None of the 11 disciples themselves ever lived out any of these definitions in full. If that were the case then I would have entitled the Bible study \textit{Requirements to Become a Disciple}.)
- Remember, don’t let your answer be mere verbal declaration. . .

\(^{17}\) Murray, Andrew, \textit{School of Obedience.} \\
\(^{18}\) Willard, Dallas. \textit{The Divine Conspiracy.}