

John 14 • Why Christ Had To Leave

Introduction

Exactly why were the disciples' hearts troubled? Jesus had just told them He was leaving them (Jn. 13:33), He'd just revealed that one of them was a traitor (Jn. 13:21), and He even predicted that Peter would personally fail Him. (Jn. 13:36-38) In fact, Jesus had even revealed to them His own personal burden even though it in no way troubled Him the way these things troubled His disciples' hearts. (Jn. 13:21) What they were lacking He would now provide: the proper context for why all these things were about to happen which, in fact, are the proper context of why the Messiah had to first accomplish all that would come about through His death and resurrection soon to come. The reasons provided why Jesus had to leave and go to the Father are not exclusive to the disciples present at that time, but for all believers at all times.

¹“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way where I am going.”

⁵Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?”

⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

[Read v.1-6]

Q: How do Christ's words reflect the marriage process of those times?

A: After the bride and bridegroom are engaged by mutual agreement upon a marriage contract between them (similar to our covenant relationship with Christ), before the actual consummation of the marriage the groom went away to his father's house to build a new addition to house his bride and family.

Point: The groom's exact date of return was unknown to the bride, but when his work was completed and approved by his father, he returned and the wedding ceremony/feast took place. This is a teaching of the Messiah's First and Second Comings and His relationship to the Church as His bride.

Q: Is Jesus speaking symbolically? Is he using allegory or parables of any kind here? Why is that important?

A: No, Jesus is speaking literally about heaven as a real place. There's nothing symbolic or allegorical in His references to it. (Note: This should also teach us something about the nature of hell as well.)

Q: So how would you characterize the first reason Christ had to leave?

A: He had to prepare a place in heaven for us. It's the assurance of eternal life.

Q: How might the famous words of v.6 reflect how a sinner can ever hope to get to heaven?

A: It's a succinct application of the story about the Prodigal Son in Luke 15.

- Though he is lost (Lk. 15:24), Christ is the Way to the Father.
- Though he is ignorant (Lk. 15:77), Christ is the Truth.
- Though he is dead spiritually (Lk. 15:24), Christ is the Life.

Ultimately the son arrives at the Father's house upon returning in repentance.

Application: The answer to Thomas' question is our own answer, that we're expected to put Christ into practice in the mean time until He returns to permanently take us home.

⁷If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”

⁸Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”

⁹Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. ¹¹Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

¹²Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. ¹³Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

¹⁵“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. ¹⁶I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will

[Read v.7-11]

Q: Why might we be able to make a case that Philip has a history of “seeing” problems?

1. Nearly the first words recorded out of Philip’s mouth were, “Come and see” (Jn. 1:46)
2. He couldn’t “see” anyway to possibly feed the great crowd. (Jn. 6:7)
3. When the Greeks approached Philip the request was, “We wish to see Jesus”. (Jn. 12:21)

Point: Philip is a repeated example of what Jesus makes clear, that it is by faith that we see the Father as we come to know Christ better.

Q: How would you characterize the second reason Christ had to leave?

A: In order to reveal the Father to us by faith.

Application: The answer to Philip’s question is a response to our own situation that the greater issue where God is concerned is faith in Christ.

[Read v.12-14]

Q: Did the disciples ever experience a time when their needs weren’t met?

A: During the course of Christ’s earthly ministry Christ supplied all of their needs.

Point: Every physical act of Christ has a dual, spiritual meaning. Taking care of their physical needs laid the foundation of promise to fulfill all their spiritual needs as well.

Q: So what does Christ provide in His absence?

A: He grants them the privilege of prayer.

Q: Given the context of these verses, what does it mean to “pray in Christ’s name”?

A: It means to pray for His glory, asking for whatever Jesus Himself would desire.

Q: Why are we able to make the case that the works He does through us today are “greater works”?

A: The works Christ does through us today are “greater” in the sense that we are mere human vessels, while those witnessed by the disciples were performed while He was God incarnate ministering on the earth.

Application: If you always want a positive answer to prayer, always pray that the outcome glorify Christ regardless of whether or not it conforms to one’s personal desires. It’s always about doing HIS work, not ours.

[Read v.15-26]

Q: What is the first name used by Jesus to refer to the Holy Spirit?

A: “Helper”. (v.16 & 26). It could be literally translated, “the One standing alongside to help you”.

Q: Why does Jesus state “He will give you ANOTHER Helper”?

A: “Another” actually means “another of the same kind”. It not only refers to the fact that the Spirit is God just as Christ is God, but that while God

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come to you. ¹⁹After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. ²⁰In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³Jesus answered and said to him, “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. ²⁴He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

²⁵“These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

²⁷Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. ²⁸You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

in the form of Christ was originally with them on earth, when Christ goes away God in the form of the Spirit will continue to be with us.

Point: *The Spirit living **within** the disciples would take the place of the Savior living **beside** the disciples.*

Q: What is the second name by which Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit?

A: “The Spirit of truth”. (v.17)

Q: How is this role as the Spirit of truth further described here?

1. “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me”. (v.21)
2. “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word”. (v.23)
3. “He who does not love Me does not keep My words”. (v.24)
4. “...the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father’s who sent Me”. (v.24)
5. “He [the Holy Spirit] will teach you all things”. (v.26)

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

John 17:17

Q: What term does Christ use which speaks of a deeper relationship with Christ?

A: “Orphans”. (v.18) In that era and culture a father wasn’t just a biological parent but a teacher, guide, and guardian.

Point: *Jesus’ leaving not only enabled the sending of the Holy Spirit, but made possible a deeper relationship with Christ in the process.*

Q: According to v.21-26, how will a deeper relationship come about?

1. It will come about by obedience to the Word. (v.21)
2. It will come about by love for the Word. (v.24)
3. It will come about by the teaching of the Word by the Holy Spirit. (v.26)

Application: *A loving relationship with Christ is not based on shallow emotions or talk, but by loving and obeying His Word through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Q: How does this section contrast with the very opening section of this chapter?

A: In v.1-3 Jesus talks about believers going to heaven to live with the Father and Son, but here He talks about the Father and Son coming to abide in the believer on earth through the Holy Spirit.

Q: Why might it be significant that although Jesus is leaving He promises in v.18, “I will come to you”?

A: It refers to several things: His coming to the disciples after His resurrection, His coming to the disciples and all believers through the Person of the Holy Spirit, and His future coming to take all believers to heaven. These things were only possible by His “going away”.

[Read v.27-31]

Q: What is the kind of peace one gets from the world?

A: The world’s peace is shallow, unsatisfying, temporary at best, and almost always consisting of some kind of appeasement.

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²⁹“Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. ³⁰I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; ³¹but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

Q: How does this differ from the kind of peace provided in Christ?

A: It's a peace that transcends the conditions of the world, not compromising the truth so as to produce a greater assurance of life both in the present and the one to come. It can only be realized through a personal relationship with Him.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 5:1

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:9

Application: *Psychologists often refer to obtaining “peace of mind”; Christ, through His death and resurrection, provides “peace with God”.*

Q: What does Jesus mean when stating, “the Father is greater than I”?

A: While in earthly form, Jesus the Son of Man in a human body was obedient to the Father who provided Christ with His words and works. By going away He would once again become the Son of God, equal with the Father.

Q: What is a greater benefit of Christ’s “going away” where Satan is concerned?

A: Christ’s death and resurrection will defeat Satan, the author of confusion and unrest. (The opposite of biblical “peace”.)

Point: *By putting into practice in His own life the very things Christ is requiring of all believers, to “do exactly as the Father commanded”, He is providing the ultimate example of how we should live until Christ’s return.*

Application: *The final benefit of Christ “going away” is to grant His peace.*

Overall Application

Actually, you could summarize the benefits of each section above into a single word:

1. *Life (v.1-6)*
2. *Faith (v.7-11)*
3. *Works (v.12-14)*
4. *Truth (v.15-26)*
5. *Peace (v.27-31)*

- *How are these qualities reflected in your own life?*
- *How do they speak of areas of your personal relationship with Christ warranting improvement?*
- *What measurements have you used that aren’t in this list? What might that speak of?*
- *To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statement, “None of these qualities are possible without an obedient and loving commitment to God’s Word”?*

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