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The Sermons of Jesus Christ: Thursday Night Passover Sermon

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THE SERMONS OF JESUS

THE THURSDAY NIGHT PASSOVER SERMON (John 14-16)

Introduction:

Assuming that Jesus was crucified at 9:00 A.M. on Friday, this sermon was given piecemeal at various locations over an extended period. It was begun in the Upper Room (John 14) and completed during a midnight walk through the deserted streets of Jerusalem en route to Gethsemane (John 15-16).

- **Reasons for the sermon**—*“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you”* (John 14:25).
 - A. That the believer might experience joy—*“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full”* (John 15:11).
 - B. That we might not stumble—*“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended”* (John 16:1).
 - C. That we might not forget His words—*“But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you”* (John 16:4).
 - D. That we might experience peace—*“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

- **Relationships in the sermon**
 - A. Those relationships involving the Savior
 - 1. Christ and the Father
 - a. He declares Him (John 14:8-9)—*“Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”*
 - b. He is inseparably linked to Him (John 14:10-11)—*“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works”* (John 14:10).
 - c. He glorifies Him (John 14:13).

- d. He goes to Him (John 14:2, 12, 28; 16:10, 16, 28)—*“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father”* (John 16:28).

Here in one verse Jesus summarizes His entire ministry.

His incarnation—*“I came forth from the Father.”*

His earthly life—*“and am come into the world.”*

His ascension (following the crucifixion and resurrection)—*“again, leave the world.”*

His great high priestly work—*“and go to the Father.”*

2. Christ and the Holy Spirit

- a. He comes at Christ’s prayer request—*“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever”* (John 14:16).
- b. He comes to honor and bear witness to Christ (John 15:26, 16:13-15)—
“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26). *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you”* (John 16:13-14).
- c. He comes to perform a three-fold work for Christ (John 16:7-11).
- (1) To reprove the world of sin (John 16:8)—*“Of sin, because they believe not on me”* (John 16:9).
- (2) To reprove the world of righteousness (John 16:8)—*“Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more”* (John 16:10).
- (3) To reprove the world of judgment (John 16:8)—*“Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged”* (John 16:11).

Note that Jesus says “sin” and not “sins.” The only sin the Holy Spirit will rebuke sinners of is the sin of rejecting Christ. The reason is that this is the only sin which will eventually send a person to hell.

3. Christ and believers

- a. He will come for them—*“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:2, 3).

Note the phrase, *“I will come again, and receive you unto myself.”* This is the only reference to the Rapture in the four Gospels, and the first time in Scripture that God promises to take people from the earth.

- b. He will dwell in them—*“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you”* (John 14:20).
- c. He will attach to them (John 14:20).
- d. He will work through them in producing fruit and more fruit (John 15:2); in producing much fruit (John 15:5).

Note the progression of this: Fruit, more fruit, and much fruit (15:1-5). This fruit can signify converts (Rom. 1:13), Christian character (Gal. 5:22-23), or conduct (Phil. 1:11; Rom. 6:21-22). Jesus then promises that this fruit will remain (see John 15:16).

B. Those relationships involving the saint

1. The believer and the Father

- a. Indwelled by the Father—*“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him”* (John 14:23).

Here is an amazing revelation:

In Col. 1:27 we are told that the Son indwells the believer.

In 1 Cor. 6:19 we learn that the Holy Spirit indwells the believer. Here in John 14:23 we hear Jesus saying the Father Himself also indwells the believer.

Note also an additional truth:

In Gal. 2:20 we are told that the Son loves us.

In 2 Cor. 13:14 we learn that the Holy Spirit loves us.

Here in John 14:23 (see also 16:27) we read that the Father loves us.

- b. Loved by the Father (John 14:21; 16:27)—*“For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God”* (John 16:27).
- c. Empowered by the Father—*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father”* (John 14:12).

He meant ‘greater works’ in a quantitative way and not a qualitative sense. Examples:

The establishment of local churches.

The spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

2. The believer and the Holy Spirit

- a. To be taught by the Holy Spirit — *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”* (John 14:26).

These words would later have great significance for three of those disciples in the Upper Room. They were Matthew, John, and Peter, all of whom were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a portion of the Word of God.

- b. To be permanently indwelled by the Holy Spirit — *“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever”* (John 14:16).

This is a startling new revelation, for it promises the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer. This concept was unknown in the Old Testament.

3. The believer and other believers — *“This is my commandment. That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you”* (John 15:12-14).

4. The believer and persecutions

- a. To expect many persecutions — *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me”* (John 15:18-21).

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me” (John 16:1-3).

- b. To rejoice in all persecutions — *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me ... Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”* (John 14:1, 27).

“A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow; because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for

joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you ... These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:21, 22, 33).

5. The believer and fruit bearing

a. The source involved — *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husband-man” (John 15:1).*

b. The steps involved:

(1) **Abide in Christ**— *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:4-5).*

Various explanations have been offered as to why Christ used the vine and branch analogy concerning the relationship between Himself and His followers. He may have seen a vine growing over the door of the Upper Room house as they were leaving. He may have called attention to the small fires on the horizon caused by the burning of dead branches.

(2) **Study the Word**— *“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3).*

(3) **Submit to pruning**— *“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit ... If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:2, 6).*

If a branch fails to bear fruit, it is rejected and cast aside (15:6). There is a problem concerning these fruitless branches that are removed from the vine (15:2, 6). Three theories are offered at this point.

That the removed branches represent Christians who lose their salvation— this theory is totally refuted by various Scripture verses.

That they are Christians who commit the sin unto death as described in Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:27-34; 1 John 5:16— The burning, according to this theory, would be their works, as seen in 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

That they represent mere professing Christians (religious people) who are finally severed from their superficial connection with Christ— This had already happened with Judas. (See John 13:27-30; 17:12.)

- c. The success involved—*“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples”* (John 15:7-8).
- d. The stability involved—*“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you”* (John 15:16).

Note the phrase, *“I have chosen you.”* In Jesus’ day the disciple would normally select his own rabbi. But this is not the case with the believer. The author of Hebrews makes this very clear: *“And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron”* (Heb. 5:4).

Note also the role that the Father plays in all this. Here we are told that a fruitbearing son or daughter will enjoy a prayer-answering Father. We usually reverse the formula, assuming prayers must precede fruit.

We are the branches and Christ is the vine. The only function of a branch is to bear fruit. Branch wood makes poor firewood. No builder would think of using branch wood to construct a ship, or a house, or a piece of furniture.