

Gospel of John Chapter 14 - John Karmelich

My series on the Gospel of John seems to have turned into a discussion of great theological questions. I believe the ideal question for this chapter is, "How does God comfort believers"? Obviously He does provide the air we breathe, the gravity we use and our ability to provide for our needs. Those types of things God provides for all people. We can and should always find lots of reasons to be grateful, but I will argue that this chapter explains how God comforts believers, which also means we should look for ways to comfort others in their times of need.

We are now at the night before His crucifixion. You'd think this was a time for the disciples to comfort Jesus, yet He realized that, after three years where God provided for them to be witnesses for Him, He was about to leave them. That means it was a time for Jesus to comfort the disciples and explain what He was going to do for them after He left. It's important to remember that the disciples got used to Him providing for their needs for those three years. Now He'll be gone and I'm sure they will ponder what'll become of them after He's gone. Therefore, this chapter deals with comforting the disciples so we can use this as an example of how we're to use our lives to comfort others when He's not "standing beside us telling us what to do next"!

I always start with the assumption that if you're reading this study, then you already believe Jesus died for your sins, He's God and Lord of your life. If that's the case, then it's time to ask the question, "How does He comfort us especially when we don't sense His presence at any moment"? If we accept all the facts about Jesus I just stated (He's God, etc.), then realize we can be comforted with those promises that He makes to the disciples in this chapter. Since Jesus is God it means He's incapable of lying or joking in such situations! It means we can trust in His promises no matter what!

Before I begin, I'd like you to consider something else. John wrote this Gospel many decades after this speech was given. How do we know John got the facts right or made it up? Realize John was tortured and punished heavily for his belief that Jesus is God! He wrote this knowing people would accept His writing as the Gospel truth. A promise made in this chapter is when Jesus leaves He gives us the Holy Spirit. One job of the Spirit is to help us with what God says. I always say that if you have any doubts about whether or not the Spirit is working inside of us, if there's a Bible passage that's confusing to you then write down the question and pray over it. What the Spirit does is help us understand what stuff in the bible means. Like most of us, if you asked me what I had for dinner exactly a month ago, I'd have no idea. Now try to recall a speech you heard 40 years ago. That's why I'm positive the Holy Spirit was John's guide for what Jesus said 40 years earlier. John wrote the "The Upper Room Discourse", which is Chapters 13-14! It is in effect, what Jesus said to His disciples during a time of great trial. He could recall perfectly with the Holy Spirit's guidance exactly what Jesus said 40 years earlier!

So why isn't this speech in the other Gospels? Didn't the other writers have the Holy Spirit with them? Keep in mind Matthew and John were two of the "12." Mark got his writings talking to Peter. Luke is a man who came along during Paul's missionary journeys and wrote it after interviewing the people who interacted with Jesus. My point is the "The Upper Room Discourse" in John's gospel is for believers. I would also argue that John's gospel is for the church just as Matthew's gospel is the only one to contain the "Sermon on the Mount" as it was written to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah. My point's that John put this sermon here for the church to "know things" as believers.

OK let's focus on getting comforted now. The first part of the lesson discusses the fact Jesus is leaving to make a room for them in heaven. I thought about this, do we need places to sleep in heaven? Does

our rooms have couches and big entertainment centers? Do we eat food? Realize His house is a giant throne similar to the temple Solomon built. I hold the view that we exist in more than three dimensions in heaven. That's how all believers get close to Jesus for eternity. (Just my opinion!) The point is Jesus is preparing a place for us when we get to heaven. That led to doubting Thomas asking Jesus, "How do we know the way"? I'm grateful for that question. Jesus responded, in effect, by saying, "I'm the only way into heaven and one must go through Me to get there"! If there's another way to heaven, the cross wasn't necessary! That led to Jesus saying, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father."

I don't know if the disciples wanted a photograph of God the Father or some sort of miracle for God to appear in front of them. That's why Jesus answered the way He did. Jesus ended the speech by saying, "believe that God the Father is in Me or believe because of the miracles each of you saw." Either way, it's essential for salvation to believe Jesus is God, the Son of God, and He's Lord of our lives.

Then in Verse 12, Jesus says we will do even greater works than He did. No, it does not mean each of us will raise people from the dead or give eyesight to the blind. Think about how much the church has grown since Jesus walked the earth. He died with 11 disciples and a handful of others. The number of Christians in the world is now in the millions or billions. I don't know about you, but I would say that's greater work than Jesus' miracles to see that sort of growth.

Jesus says if we ask anything "In His name" we will get it. OK where's my Rolls Royce? Obviously it doesn't mean we can pray for things to benefit us. It just means if something is God's will, and we pray through Jesus paying for our sins, He will answer. Sometimes the answer is "no" or "not now." Yes, I know it's often a matter of trial and error, but we're always welcome to ask!

Jesus then says that if we love Him we will keep His commandments. No, it's not saying we got to be perfect. It just means if we care about Him, it is our desire to love one another and care about how we treat people! That leads to a quick speech about the Holy Spirit. So why does the Spirit only dwell in us after Jesus rose from the dead? Because He's paid the price for our sins, after that we're free to use our lives to glorify Him. The job of the Spirit is not only to convict us of our sins, but also to draw us closer to Him. That's why He helps us to recall scripture and understand what it means!

The speech ends with Jesus saying, in effect, "the ruler of this world is coming". It refers to when the enemies of Jesus crucify Him thinking that solved that problem! I realize Satan was in the world a long time before that event and is to this day. Just as Satan couldn't prevent Jesus from coming in the world (think of all the attempts to wipe out the Messianic line), so Satan could not force Jesus to sin or take a "short cut" instead of the cross. Bottom line, all of that was necessary, as there is no other way to have a perfect God spend eternity with people who easily turn to sin, than have God Himself pay for all of our sins.

I'm well aware that most of you reading this already know all of this. Yes, it's good to be reminded of a bunch of truths that we accept as fact. The important thing for us to remember is that Jesus will never leave us or forsake us. Yes, there are times when we don't feel His presence, and those are often times we are tested as if God is saying, "Do you trust Me now, even through this"? The disciples were about to start a time where they were scared for their lives. They didn't know what would happen to them as Jesus was not there to "take the bullets". This time of comfort reminds them and us that we are never (repeat never) abandoned by God no matter what we're going through in life. Hope that brings as much comfort to you as it does to me!

If you liked this little study, I wrote a more detailed account about twenty years ago! To read the other one, click on one of the two links on this page. Thanks again for reading this. John