

## Gospel of John Chapter 16 - John Karmelich

Let me start by setting the scene. We're in a middle of a four-chapter section that's a series of speeches Jesus gave to the disciples the night before He was crucified. I'd argue the main purpose was to prepare the disciples for the fact that after three years together He was leaving them. It simply means He wants to teach them what to expect after He leaves. It kind of reminds me of what we should learn before any medical operation: one gets past surgery fear by learning as much as one can about it before it occurs.

That is why in this chapter Jesus spends a lot of time preparing the disciples about what to expect once He's gone! It's about preparing them how live without Him physically there. Yes, that's a clue for us! I know most of us have spent much of our lives trusting Jesus is God, and that He died for our sins. Why should we care about all these preparation details when we've lived much of our lives for Jesus? Keep in mind John wrote this Gospel to show people that Jesus is God. It includes preparation for trusting in Jesus includes trusting the Spirit to guide our lives. Jesus in effect takes up residence inside of us when we accept Him as savior! That leads to my question of the week: How do we prepare for the suffering that comes with life? Knowing that suffering is part of life helps us to deal with it when we it comes. I realize suffering isn't forever only helps after it's over! Still, it's never easy to deal with pain, no matter the source. That is why I want to focus on the text of this chapter to help us deal with the suffering that comes from living!

Keep in mind that Jesus compared suffering to a woman giving birth. His point is that once the baby is born the mom forgets about the pain due to the joy of the new baby. My mom gave birth to four boys. She's joked all her life that giving birth is like pulling your lower lip over your head! Just saying, pain is a big part of life. When it's over, it's usually a time for rejoicing. With that in mind notice how Jesus prepares the disciples for the tough times to come and of course, how that affects us when we deal with our own suffering issues of life.

Let's begin by remembering where we are in the text. There were no chapter breaks in the original text and that's significant here. Chapters 13 through 16 are in effect a speech given by Jesus about what He is about to go through, mixed in with some "Q&A." It began with the "Last Supper" Passover meal. At that meal, Jesus exposed Judas as a betrayer who then fled the scene. The rest of His speech took place walking from where they had a casual dinner to the garden where Judas led the guards to arrest Jesus.

In short, this is all in effect, Jesus' last words to His disciples before He paid the price for all sins. We are at the last part of Jesus teaching the disciples what to expect after He's gone. The lesson for us is to prepare us for the life God means for us to live (good and bad). With that said, time for more details:

Jesus starts by saying in effect, "I'm telling you all this so you won't lose hope after I'm gone"! Those of us who know our Gospels well, know that Peter denied knowing Jesus after this and the rest of them ran for their lives when Jesus was arrested! Jesus, in effect, forgave them in advance. The point is that when Jesus was gone, He didn't want the disciples to think the last three years were a waste of time and here's how life will work once He's gone! If that opening line was hard, realize that He is just warming up. He then says they will be kicked out of the synagogues (remember they're all Jewish). That means all of them would be excommunicated by their society! If that wasn't bad enough, Jesus next says that people will think killing them is a service to God. It's a prediction of Paul (not one of the original "12") who later killed believers before Paul became a Christian himself. Jesus is describing the future in the same way a doctor explains a surgery process before it occurs to prepare us for life after that surgery!

As I said in the last lesson, more Christians were killed for their faith in the 20th century than any other century in history. I doubt the 21st will be any better. The reason God allows that is to show He's more powerful than Satan. Remember Satan rules till Jesus returns so he's doing all he can to slow all church growth, even killing believers.

Let's just say all of this put the disciples in a depressed mood! Jesus then announces after He leaves it'd be the time for the Holy Spirit to come. I heard a great illustration on this. Suppose Jesus was going to be at our church next week. (Yes, there'd be great attendance!) We then learn He'll be at another church a long distance away the next day. Do you think church attendance would drop for the next week? Yes, I'm sure of that. However, if God could be at all of these churches at once, it would encourage us to go as we could all be close to God at the same time! Bottom line, the price for sin had to be paid, then the Holy Spirit can take up residence in all believers at the same time! As I also implied in the last lesson, the Spirit is what I call a "gentleman," in that He only dwells where He's wanted. That means if it's our desire to please our God, He will guide us as to what He wants. Verse 8 tells us specifically the job of the Holy Spirit's is: To convict people's hearts that Jesus is God, make us realize sin is wrong, and yes, judgment. That's why it's not up to us to convert people. Our job is to be a witness for Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit who is actually converting in people's hearts! The final thing Jesus says about the Spirit is that the ruler of this world (Satan) is judged. However, He still rules until Jesus returns, which is why it is necessary to have God guide us so we have the power to overcome the (temporary) world ruler!

By Verse 12 Jesus says, "I've got more to say, but it's too much to bear now"! Jesus just said they'd be ex-communicated and killed, but then says they can't bear more now! In other words, He gave them all they could handle at the moment, but through the power of the Spirit when He would come after Jesus rose up, then they'd understand all the things Jesus said. Through the Spirit, God gives us the ability to get all that He teaches and helps us to grow closer to Him if that is our desire!

That leads to the point I made to open this lesson: When a woman goes through childbirth it is painful. When the baby is born, and she forgets about the pain! In that sense, the disciples will be hurting since Jesus is gone, and they won't know what to do! The text says the world will rejoice because He is dead. What does that mean? People don't want to feel guilty about how they live, or don't want God to judge their lifestyle, so they think when Jesus isn't discussed it's a good thing! Obviously Jesus rose from the dead, which is why 2,000 years later multitudes worship Him as God, while others think they are doing God's will by killing believers. It is amazing to think about a man who lived in a small place like Israel 2,000 years ago is still worshipped as God today! No way that could be done without the Holy Spirit to convict people's hearts! So what's our role? We're saved so we can be witnesses for Him to the world around us!

Before I leave on that high note, I still have eight more verses to discuss. Jesus wraps up His speech by saying that when the Spirit indwells us, He'll tell us plainly about the Father. It's the idea that when we read our Bible and understand what God wants us to know about Him and what He demands of us. We then see Jesus bluntly stating that God the Father loves us because we accept Jesus as God! Then Jesus announces He is leaving to go be with God the Father. Jesus ends the chapter with the reminder that all of them will be scattered in fear for their lives. In effect Jesus is saying, "Despite that He's returning to God the Father, so we can have peace (despite our sins)," because Jesus overcame the world by paying the price for our sins! Knowing that gives us peace! All this is going to end with a prayer by Jesus to God the Father. That's the big topic for the next lesson and I hope you'll join me for that.

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