

Title: What Jesus Wants
Date: 09/1/24
Subject: Jesus foretells his followers they'll face trouble but assures them he has overcome the world.
Scripture: John 16:1 – 4, 33

Jesus ends the teaching portion of the Upper Room Discourse by sharing why he has spoken as he has. This doesn't mean there's nothing to learn from the praying portion, his high priestly prayer. Chapter 17 has valuable insights from listening in to how Jesus prays.

The Lord uses similar phrasing at the beginning and end of chapter 16. Read 16:1- 4, 33.

The Savior spoke the same way throughout his teaching in the upper room: "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am" (13:19), "I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe" (14:29), "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (15:11). Sounds like he was laser focused on what he wanted and needed to communicate.

He has two reasons for telling us the things he tells us. We'll get to those, but first, a review of the things he has told.

I. Jesus wants us to know some important things.

A quick review of what Jesus said as part of the "all this": He gives marching orders in a new command - love one another as he has loved those who are his (13:34). His plan is to go to heaven to prepare places for those who trust in him so he can come back and get them to be with him forever (14:1-4). Jesus explains he is the one and only way to get to the Father as he is the way, he is the truth and he is the life (14:6). He asks that we put our trust, full confidence, belief in him based upon what he says and the evidence of the miracles he performed (14:11). He returns to the theme of love. This time its love directed to him which will be shown through obeying his commands. It's so important he repeated it again and again and again and again (14:15, 21, 23, 15:10, 14). He promised to send another Counselor, the Spirit of truth, who will be with his followers forever to teach all things and remind them of everything Jesus said as the Spirit testifies about Jesus (14:17, 26; 15:26). He provides numerous statements about the personal relationship between himself as God the Son and God the Father (14:7, 9, 10). He's dependent upon the Father for his mission, the ability to accomplish it and the words he says (14:24, 31). He warned that trouble was brewing as the prince of the world was coming (14:30).

Okay. That's what Jesus packed in the end of chapter 13 and chapter 14. Here's chapter 15. Jesus states he's the vine that provides what we need as he has chosen and appointed us to bear fruit that will last (15:1-5, 16). He returns to the theme of love and ties obedience to his commands, specifically the one to love

each other, as the indication that a person is remaining in close contact with him (15:9). He informs his followers that the world system opposed to God, those who don't know Christ as Savior, are not only at odds with those who have placed their trust in Christ, but will hate them as they've hated Jesus (15:18-25).

In chapter 16, between the opening verses and the last verse, we find more about the work of the Holy Spirit. He has roles in the lives of people who believe in Christ and those who don't (16:5-16). Jesus again states the necessity of him going away (16:5). He tells his disciples they'll experience grief, which will turn to joy while the world will go from rejoicing to grief (16:17-24). The disciples remark that they believe and are commended for their belief, but Jesus tells them they'll be scattered to their homes and leave him alone (16:25-32).

We come to the first reason Jesus tells us what he tells us.

II. Jesus doesn't want us to go astray.

To say Jesus is concerned about and protective of those who are his puts it mildly. The example of a mama bear comes to mind. Those who venture into the woods are strongly advised to not come between a mama bear and her cubs as she doesn't like it. She'll do what it takes to protect her cubs.

Jesus will do what it takes to protect his people... but has a different approach. He doesn't lash out with vengeance on earth. His judgment of those opposed to him comes at the end of life.

To go astray means to fall away, be tripped up or stumble. The world and the devil are setting traps. Jesus doesn't want his followers to be surprised. "What's going on? Where'd that come from? This shouldn't be happening to me because I love Jesus. No one ever told us it would be like this..."

To aid in helping the disciples not go astray when trouble comes, Jesus says he's forewarning them so they'll remember that he told them ahead of time that they'd experience the hatred of the world. It wasn't an preemptive "I told you so!" The purpose was to help them understand and not be shaken from their roots.

It's like the army general telling his troops what to expect, the enemy's tactics, the probable location of traps and the kind of traps, the need to be vigilant.

Jesus forewarns us about the hatred from the world so we'll know to expect it. We'll realize it's part of what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

Jesus forewarned the disciples about the next few hours. Jesus had foretold that one of them, Judas Iscariot, would betray him and Peter would deny him three times. In the next few moments, he would tell them that all of them would leave him alone. The disciples would face opportunities to go astray...and unfortunately they did...but it wasn't the end of the line.

The Lord also looked beyond the actions and reactions of that night. In the future they'd face persecution that would include being put out of the synagogue. People during the life of Christ didn't want to be kicked out as this would affect their social status, cut them off from their connections as the synagogue was the center of life and create distance from their families.

The parents of the man who'd been born blind were afraid of being put out of the synagogue. Therefore, they refused to tell the religious leaders that Jesus healed their son, even though they knew Jesus

had done it (John 9:22). On Monday of Christ's last week on earth, the biblical record enlightens about the many leaders believing in him... but didn't confess their faith because they didn't want to be put out of the synagogue as they loved praise from men more than praise from God (John 12:42, 43).

Unfortunately, hatred from the world would lead to more than being excommunicated. All of the disciples except John were martyred for their faith in Christ. Jesus said those who did the killing would have the twisted idea they were serving God. That's the way a guy named Saul felt as he chased Christ followers around Jerusalem, Damascus and any place he could. . . until he personally encountered Jesus and put his faith in him.

That night the eleven were going to be surrounded by a mob who came to arrest Jesus. They probably felt they were being attacked and their lives were in danger. They scattered like scared rabbits and failed the test of their faith.

Intense persecution began soon after Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven. The biblical record in the book of Acts informs us the disciples preached in the temple but were kicked out by the religious leaders. They were jailed. They were beaten. A great persecution broke out in which Christians were arrested, imprisoned and even killed. Others scattered across the Roman Empire.

What treatment should Christians in the 21st century expect? Should we expect anything less than trouble, difficulty, suffering, trials, etc.? At this point in America, Christians face discrimination, hatred and minor persecution. In times past, there have been physical attacks.

Our brothers and sisters around the world encounter far worse. Tara was caught with a Bible. The 16 year old was locked in a room, without food or medical attention and told she'd die alone. Her father's actions and words. Her story and that of other women is in the book *Hearts of Fire*. I've referred to it before. Some of you have read it and said it's a tough read. The book is by the group Voice of the Martyrs. There are two copies on the foyer table for you to take, whether you read all of it or part. Return them so they can be passed on.

If we've placed our trust and hope in Jesus Christ, we're included in the group that's hated by the world. The world isn't our buddy, old pal that has our best interest at heart.

The world will fight against Christian morals. Those who belong to the world will slander those who place their trust in Christ and label them as intolerant bigots. They'll sever ties of friendship or family. Early in Jesus' ministry, the Savior foretold that family members would betray one another (Matthew 10:21). Jesus stated the necessity of his followers to take up their cross and follow him (Matthew 16:24).

When we see crosses, most of them are jewelry or artistic representations. The disciples viewed them differently. They were familiar with the real thing. They understood the cross was a device for delivering a torturous death.

One man writes about the impact on the eleven disciples in the upper room (Barnes' Notes, John 16:1): *If they had not been apprised of this, if they had not known why Jesus was about to die, and if they had not been encouraged with the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, they would have sunk under these trials, and forsaken him and his cause. And we may learn*

hence: 1. that if Christians were left to themselves they would fall away and perish, 2. that God affords means and helps beforehand to keep them in the path of duty, 3. that the instructions of the Bible and the help of the Holy Spirit are all granted to keep them from apostasy, 4. that Jesus beforehand secured the fidelity and made certain the continuance in faith of his apostles, seeing all their dangers and knowing all their enemies.

Jesus didn't want them or us to go astray. This brings us to the second reason Jesus told us these things.

III. Jesus wants us to have peace.

The admonition in v. 33 was immediately preceded by Jesus informing the disciples that they would all scatter to their own home and leave him alone.

"In this world you will have trouble." Twice earlier Jesus had brought up trouble. It was one of the first things he said in the upper room discourse: "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (14:1). Minutes later he said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (14:27).

I used this verse when talking with the salesman while buying a different car. He had talked about problems, like engine needing to be replaced, being a part of life. I mentioned that that my sermon included Jesus telling us that in this world we would have trouble, but he has overcome the world. About as far as it got as he made some vague spiritual sounding statements and moved back to the business at hand.

Jesus wants his followers to have peace. Peace can be described as "total well-being and inner rest of the spirit, in fellowship with God" (NIV Study Bible note John 14:27). It's being in harmony with God. One of everybody's favorite writers, anonymous: "Peace that Jesus gives is not the absence of trouble, but is rather the confidence that He is there with you always."

One of the main concerns is: when do we get peace? Some may think the peace Jesus gives will be received in heaven as he's contrasting it with the trouble we'll have in the world. True, heaven will bring ultimate peace. However, it seems Jesus is speaking about peace in the present time. Earlier he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you" (John 14:27). It can be a present reality.

The disciples could have peace and we can have peace the same way. Look beyond the circumstances of life to the Author and Perfecter of our Faith and our lives. Peace is an anchor for the soul - fastened to the Rock of Ages that cannot move.

First and last verse of My Anchor Holds: Tho' the angry surges roll On my tempest-driven soul, I am peaceful, for I know, Wildly though the winds may blow, I've an anchor safe and sure, That can evermore endure... Troubles almost 'whelm the soul; Griefs like billows o'er me roll; Tempters seek to lure astray; Storms obscure the light of day: But in Christ I can be bold, I've an anchor that shall hold. And it holds, my anchor holds: Blow your wildest, then, O gale, On my bark so small and frail; By His grace I shall not fail, For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.

Will Your Anchor Hold?: Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, When the clouds unfold their wings of strife? When the strong tides lift and the cables strain, Will your anchor drift, or firm remain? We have an anchor that keeps the soul, Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

The bad news is we're at war with the world but the really great news is we aren't at war with God. The reason it's possible to have peace with him and during life is Jesus Christ has overcome the world. When he said that, He hadn't yet died and risen from the dead but spoke of it as an accomplished fact. The storms of life may fall heavily on us, but they don't need trap and trip us into falling away from the Lord.

Columnist Deborah Mathis wrote about being at Union Station in Washington D.C. on a busy day. It was crowded and filled with noise: public address announcer calling out arrivals and departures, cell phones and other devices begging for attention, car horns honking, babies crying, a security guard yelling "Stop! You can't go in there!" Three women stood up from where they'd been seated so they could argue with each other more loudly. A man in front of her nervously paced in a tight circle.

Then she heard someone singing: "What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear; What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer." A change came over the noisy crowd as the voice continued: "O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer."

The quarrelers stopped and quietly sat down. People seemed to slow their hurried pace and relax as they tried to hear the singing. Then Deborah realized she was quietly singing, along with a few others, including the women who'd been arguing. The nervous pace quietly said: "Nice, huh? I don't even believe in Jesus, but that's nice." (From article by Rubel Shelly. From a sermon by Jeff Strite, "i-Serve" 1/11/2009).

Lucinda Norman was Christmas shopping at a mall. All day people had pushed, elbowed and cut in front of her. During a 10 minute extra 10% off special, a woman grabbed a lace tablecloth from her hands, looked her in the eye and said, "Mine!" Lucinda yanked it back and won. By 4pm was belligerent and combative. She met friends at a restaurant and flagged down a server: "I need a hot tea now!" The waitress snapped back, "I'm not your server. Wait your turn." Lucinda, "Lady, I've been waiting my turn all day. Bring me some tea!" The waitress ignored her. Moments later, a friendly young man came to the table: "I'm Rob, your waiter." After he took their order, Lucinda watched him help the rude waitress with her tray, greeted other customers and staff with a smile. In the midst of the harried customers and chaos of the season, he was polite and calm. When he refilled her tea, Lucinda noticed he wore a silver ring made of connected letters spelling Jesus. She wrote, "From that moment, my attitude changed. This young man's example had reminded me of the peace that Christ came to bring." For the rest of the day, Lucinda enjoyed shopping, opened doors for other and let others in front of her in the checkout line, all in an atmosphere of peace.

John MacArthur ("The Holy Spirit Convicts the World," gty.org) shows how Christ counters the problems we'll encounter in this evil world: "The world hates you, but I love you. The world is your enemy, but I am your friend. The world gives you trouble and anxiety, but I give you My peace. The world will cause you sorrow, but I give you My joy. The world may kill you, but I give you eternal life. The world is under Satan's power, but you will have the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you."

"In this world you will have trouble, but take heart I have overcome the world."