



Homecoming

WEEK 6

STUDY GUIDE



CENTRAL
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2021

Read: John 14:15–31

Scripture Verse: *“If you love me, you will obey what I command.”* – John 14:15

Today’s Thought:

Over the years, I have had many opportunities to be with a person during their last moments of life on this earth. It can be a time of mixed emotions with rapid mood changes requiring professional assistance to cope. Many of those I would visit were at home under hospice or palliative care, where a nurse or trained family member would provide a sense of peace and comfort in maintaining a quality of life for the terminally ill person. For those who knew and had a relationship with Christ, it was a time of joy and celebration. Yet, there was always a momentary twinge of sadness at losing a family member and friend. As we reach this chapter in John’s Gospel, we sense a similar mood.

After three years of traveling with his disciples and dealing with the crowds, the Pharisees, and the constant threat of the Romans, Jesus is finally able to get alone with them in an upstairs room in Jerusalem. It’s a tender moment of peace and quiet to reflect on what the following days will bring. In a sense, it’s a strange time, a hospice moment. Jesus’ life could now be measured not by months or weeks but by the hour. He had chosen to spend His last hours on earth with His guys in an intimate fellowship and presence with God.

Jesus, who should have been the one receiving the palliative care, was instead providing last-minute instruction and care to His disciples. He wanted them prepared for what was about to occur on His journey to the cross and what would follow. I believe that Jesus expressed His love for them and wanted to leave them with specific instructions on how to continue the ministry in His absence. Through their relationship, the guys have experienced Jesus’ constant provision for everything necessary to minister to the people. And now, Jesus was announcing the soon coming of the Friend that would help them fulfill their call. The disciples who loved their Master and Lord would be empowered to continue to obey the commands and instructions laid out by Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit. We read of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It is only by a relationship with Christ and our love for Him that we can obey His commands to live a holy life empowered by the Holy Spirit!

- Describe the atmosphere of the upper room as Jesus shares of his upcoming arrest, trial and execution.
- What was Jesus' preparing His disciples for?
- What does Jesus promise all of those who have a relationship with Him?
- How are we able to love the Lord enough to obey His commands?
- Does your life display your love for Jesus?

Further Reading: 1 John 4:1-6

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2021

Read: John 14:15–31

Scripture Verse: *"I will ask the Father. And he will give you another Friend to help you and to be with you forever."*

- John 14:16

Today's Thought:

My wife and I recently had the opportunity to return to the church I first served right out of college. A lot had changed since our last time in town but being invited to share at a friend's funeral brought us back to where it all started over 24 years ago. It was good to be back and to see old friends. Many of our conversations brought pleasant memories of our times together. And just as it had when we left the first time, a similar kind of sadness came over us as we departed for home. Although we were parting ways with dear friends again, it would never sever our relationships with them.

The same story can be told of Jesus and His disciples. Even though Jesus would soon depart from His friends, the relationship that they had built together would never be severed. Those ties established would be continued and extended through the giving and receiving of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' resurrection. John confirmed this tie in chapter 7:39, *"When he said this, he meant the Holy Spirit. Those who believed in Jesus would receive the Spirit later. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given. This was because Jesus had not yet received glory."* The giving of the Spirit should by no means be interpreted as launching a new ministry or program offering unique teaching. The Spirit has been given to point always to Jesus, His glory and authority, which the Spirit celebrates. Here's what we know:

1. The Spirit comes to disciples only as they are rightly related to Jesus: *"if you love me, you will obey what I command."*

The Spirit only dwells where there is obedient love to Christ.

2. The Spirit comes in response to Jesus' prayer to the Father... *"and I will ask the Father, and he will give you..."*
3. As Jesus had counseled the disciples before, the Spirit would now continue that role by coming as "another Counselor" for them.

The Spirit would now be the one to provide the necessary instruction and legal support the disciples would need.

4. The Spirit so closely represents the character and purposes of Jesus, that the Spirit's coming was like His own coming..." *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...*"

But in coming to His disciples through the Spirit's presence within them, Jesus would be "seen" by His disciples, but not by the world: "*The world will not see me anymore, but you will see me (14:19a).*" The Spirit's promised indwelling, only available to faithful followers of Jesus, brought with it the realization of His divine majesty along with a mature and stable faith in His saving grace.

5. The Spirit instructs disciples (us) by bringing back into our memory the teaching of Jesus and helps us understand its significance..." *He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you.*"

Only the peace of Christ can address our most profound human need: restoring us to a right relationship with God and our neighbor helping us to persist amid life's trouble by the personal indwelling of the Spirit. Only believers can receive the Spirit. The world cannot accept it because He only comes to those who respond to faith in Jesus.

- Why was Jesus sending the Spirit?
- What is the purpose of sending and receiving the Spirit?
- How does this text offer you hope?

Further Reading: John 16:7; I Corinthians 2:14

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021

Read: John 14:15–31

Scripture Verse: *“The Friend is the Spirit of truth. The world can’t accept him. That is because the world does not see him or know him. But you know him. He lives with you, and he will be in you.”* – John 14:17

Today’s Thought:

"I think that God will never send,
A gift so precious as a friend,
A friend who always understands,
And fills each need as it demands,
Whose loyalty will stand the test,
When skies are bright or overcast,
Who sees the faults that merit blame,
But keeps on loving just the same.
Who does far more than creeds could do.
To make us good, to make us true,
Earth's gifts a sweet contentment lend,
But only God can give a friend!"

—Rosalie Carter

Those who we call friends play an essential part in each of our lives. Friends look out for one another. They have each other's back with confidence. Friends know they can count on the other person to be there when troubling times arise. And as we look back at the disciples' lives, we get a pretty clear picture of how friends do life together.

During the three years they spent together, Jesus and his disciples became quite close friends. They did everything together during those days. The disciples became very dependent upon Jesus and probably were counting on Him always being there for them. But Jesus knew otherwise. He knew His time on earth was almost finished and how much the disciples had become dependent on him. They needed their Friend, but how could they continue without him? Already knowing what the disciples were thinking, Jesus shared with them how this friendship would continue. After asking the Father, Jesus shared with them about the "Friend" he would send to help them.

In His Upper Room discourse, Jesus shared a lot about the Friend he would send to help them carry out their mission to share the Gospel. We know the Friend to be the Holy Spirit. He would send His Spirit to them

because they could not live the Christian life as God would have them do without it. Nor can we. The Holy Spirit is given two unique names that help describe what He does. One is "another comforter," and the other is "the Spirit of Truth." The Greek word for "comforter" is "parakletos," which means "called alongside to assist." A friend comes alongside a friend to assist them, and that is what the Holy Spirit does in us and through us to accomplish what God has tasked us to do. He doesn't do the work for us, despite us, or instead of us but in us and through us.

A second descriptive name attributed to the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Truth." This name is given the Holy Spirit as it relates to Jesus, the Truth, and the Word of God, which is truth. The Holy Spirit has inspired the Word and illuminates it so that we can understand it. If that isn't awesome enough, John teaches that because the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Truth," He can never lie or be associated with lies and thus can never lead us to do anything contrary to the Word of God or His will. We can know the will of God for our lives. If we want the Holy Spirit in our lives, we must have a relationship with Jesus. And if we wish the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, we must always seek to glorify Christ and not ourselves.

Remember, to be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Word of God. It is the Spirit of Truth that uses His Word to guide us into the will and work of God! While on earth, Jesus had dwelt with his disciples, but now, he would live in them because he was returning to the Father for a time. When we repent and receive Him as Lord and Savior, He places that same Spirit in us! What a friend we have in Jesus!

- Who is the Friend Jesus is asking the Father to send as a helper?
- What is the relationship of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to the believer?
- How do you know you have the Spirit in you?
- Why can't those in the world receive the Spirit?

Further Reading: John 15:19-26

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021

Read: John 14:15–31

Scripture Verse: *“Anyone who has my commands and obeys them loves me. My Father will love the one who loves me. I too will love him. And I will show myself to him.”*

– John 14:21

Today’s Thought:

We are discussing the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and what that looks like from a faith perspective. In Scripture, obedience is the portrait of a love response. Jesus gives us clear commands in verses 21 and 23 of how the Holy Spirit affects our lives. Upon accepting Christ as our Savior, we are immediately given the gift of the filling of the Holy Spirit as our helper. The Holy Spirit in us should be evident by our attitudes and actions. Those around us should see a definite difference in our lives versus someone who chooses to live by the world’s standards.

Specifically, the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in our life should be identified by our obedience to the Word of God. As noted earlier, our obedience to God’s Word is a response to our love for Christ. However, our faithful obedience is not unwilling conformity to the law but rather should be a joy-filled reaction to what God in His love for us has done through His Son. Love and obedience are so intertwined that we cannot truly obey if we don’t love God. In fact, they are so bound together that our obedience becomes the indication of the reality of our love for Jesus.

The further evidence of the reality of Jesus’ presence in our lives depends on our obedience. When we are walking close to God, our love response to Him is obedience. When we’re not close to God, we stray, and He seems distant and unreal to us. Jesus tells us in both verses “that if you love me, you will obey me.” And at the end of verse 23 states, “My Father will love him. We will come to him and make our home with him.” Now, that’s a blessing! Our reward becomes the Father’s love and the continued presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives!

- What empowers us to love and obey?
- What is the reward for our love and obedience?
- Can the people around you see the Holy Spirit at work in your life?

Further Reading: Romans 8:9

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2021

Read: John 14:21–31

Scripture Verse: *“But the Father will send the Friend in my name to help you. The Friend is the Holy Spirit. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you.”* – John 14:26

Today's Thought:

We find in today's memory verse a reminder of what has already been stated in verses 16–17, *“the Father will send the Friend in my name to help you.”* I want to focus our attention on the text in verses 21–26 to deepen our relationship with the Father and the Son. Christ speaks of this deepening through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on his followers. As Jesus is spelling all this out during the Last Supper the night before His arrest and death, the disciples are deeply distressed over becoming “orphans” when their teacher is gone. How would they go forward without their mentor and their Messiah? This question must have been heavy on their hearts.

Although the disciples do not realize it yet, their relationship with Jesus could only become more profound and intimate after He returned to the Father. The key to a deeper connection between followers and Christ involves continued obedience to the Word and a love for the Word. Jesus promises his disciples that the helper will remind them of what they learn in and through the Word. When you and I take the time to know His Word and then live it out in the world, Jesus promises us we will enjoy close and intimate communion with both the Father and the Son. Our love for Jesus cannot be some shallow emotion we talk about; it must be love and obedience for His Word only empowered by the power of the Holy Spirit He has sent to us. Jesus promised to be with us even to the end of this age, which He fulfills through the Holy Spirit in us. Someday, we will live with the Father and Son in heaven, but until then, they have come down here to abide with us and in us through the Spirit! The gift of the Spirit is our hope and joy until that day!

- What is the key to a deeper relationship with the Father and Son?
- What is the common thread to our obedience and love for Jesus?
- Who enables us to pursue a deeper relationship to Father and Son?

- What are you actively doing to pursue a close and intimate relationship with Jesus?

Further Reading: I John 2:26-27

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