

John 16

by Robert F. Adcock

The Lord Jesus Christ's departure and the coming of the Comforter are crucial for believers to understand spiritual truths and grow in their relationship with Him.

Duration: 41:24

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 16:1-9, John 16:12-13, Acts 2:4

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of believers knowing and displaying the glory of God through their lives. The Spirit of God is said to guide believers into the truth about Jesus Christ and wants them to continually learn more about Him. Believers are called to be witnesses of Christ to the world, as they are seen as an extension of His life. The speaker also warns against complacency and falling back in one's faith, urging believers to actively pursue a deeper relationship with Christ and share the gospel with enthusiasm.

Transcript

I'd like for us this evening to look into John's Gospel, Chapter 16, and we'll read the first 13 verses. That's the first 15 verses. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

They shall put you out of the synagogue. Here the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God's service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

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. But now I go my way to him that sent me.

And none of you asketh me where goeth thou. But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth.

It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is done. I have yet many things to say unto you that ye cannot bear them last. Nevertheless, 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 show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath of mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

So, we bow again in the word of prayer. Our Father in Heaven, we bow before Thee, grateful to Thee for the very pleasant day that has been ours, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The freedom of worship and praise of such a wonderful Savior, for the fellowship of Thy dear people, and for, again, the precourse of Thy word, the spread of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ around the world.

Grant, we pray Thee, that many today have blinded eyes open, and stony hearts melted in Thy presence, and embrace the person of Your wonderful Son, and today stand accepted in the Beloved. This evening, as we look to the word of God, and again we pray Thee, give to us that consciousness of Thy presence with us in instruction, that instruction that will enrich our lives and make the person of the Lord Jesus Christ richer and more precious to our souls. For the view that we might serve better, that each one of us might know him better.

For this we ask, giving thanks in his precious name. Amen. John 16 is one of those chapters that devotes itself to the account of the very private talks that the Lord Jesus had with his own.

And there are some things here that I think serve to enlighten us to what a privileged day we live in. I've heard people say very often, I would have liked to have lived in those days and been there with the Lord. Well, I don't know about that.

I'm just thankful God has put me right where I am in this day. I believe this personally, that at Pentecost the believers were given a new capability, a spiritual discernment that they never possessed before, and certainly powerful witness that they had never possessed before. We have today that capability.

The last words that our Lord Jesus Christ wrote, recorded in the Word of God for us, is found in Acts chapter 1, verse 8, that you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost be come upon you. You shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, in Judea, even in Samaria to the most parts of the world. Yes, living in this day of God's grace, there is a privilege to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, empowered by the Spirit of God, and to witness effectively for the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we cast ourselves upon him and say, Lord, I'm your servant, you just furnish the power, you just give the enlightenment, I'll do your bidding. Indeed, that's a wonderful experience, to know that you're in God's hands and he's using you at his direction and at his will. Indeed, that is an exciting experience.

But, when you look at these believers that were right around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, there was an intimacy there and social contact. They lived together. They ate the same food.

They were subjected to the same ridicule. They were eyewitnesses of all of those experiences, yet they really lacked an understanding and an appreciation for all that would happen in that wonderful divine life, enlightenment that you and I have this evening. I recall the account of John the Baptist, and none greater than John the Baptist, according to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Among the prophets that were mentioned, none greater than John the Baptist. And yet, from his prison cell, he sent word by one of his disciples, a priest, "Lord, tell me, are you the one that has been sent, or will there be another?" Now, there seems to be just moments there in which doubt filled the mind of John the Baptist. You see, he lacked that clear discernment and understanding of the purposes and plans of God for this wonderful divine life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And our Lord rewarded him by sending back his answer, in that there was ample witness that, indeed, he was the Son of God, the Messiah, the promised one of Israel. But, in a sense, in the hearts of those disciples that bred confusion, after all, the coming king was the threat of his kingdom. And they were to be liberated and set free.

The yoke of bondage was to be broken, but that didn't happen. In fact, because of this dullness of heart and understanding, even though he shared with them that, ultimately, the Son of God must be delivered up, must suffer many things, and they couldn't come to grips with it. They weren't looking for a cross across his pathway.

They were looking for the day in which he would be crowned, which was yet to come. And so, with these thoughts in their hearts and minds that, in a sense, limited them in their comprehension of the real mission of God, as found in this person, Jesus Christ, we have this very personal talk by the Lord Jesus to his coming. These things that I've spoken unto you in this first chapter relate, I think, to the latter part of the fifteenth chapter that deal with the coming of that blessed, holy Comforter, the Spirit of God, the one that would furnish enlightenment and determination to them in their understanding of him.

It's little wonder that the word of God, in Peter's words, we need to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had a very limited concept of the person of Christ, and indeed they could not see these events that you and I look upon and review in our own hearts and in our own minds. Just a few moments ago, we retraced the steps that led up to Calvary, and we remembered the Son of God in his death for us.

They didn't anticipate anything like this, as again they were looking for him to be crowned. They were looking for something different. But I think these words come as a warning to them that it would be so easy for them to be tripped up, and for each one of them to have a sorrowful reaction in his soul at the very thought of not seeing the kingdom set up.

And all of the things that they had experienced in the way of hostility, this fanatical spirit of the Jews, the ring was being tightened a little bit every day, and each day that hostility and that opposition to the person of Christ was gaining in intensity until ultimately total rejection and crucify him. We will not have this man to rule over us. I think you could sum it up in these words when they would later reflect and look back and say, now I remember he told us that.

He told us about these things, and our ears were dull, and we just didn't comprehend what he was talking about. So, when you think about it in that light, would you prefer to live in that sort of atmosphere, or live today with, here, here's the word of God, here's the divine record, it's clear. We can read it, and by the Spirit of God we can understand these things.

It's like looking at a textbook, and you know the full account is not here. We look and we say, we understand, but we look in retrospect, we look back, we understand these things. We ourselves are a part of history, because the book of the Acts is still being written.

This is the history of the church, and you and I are part of that history. So, there are yet many things that we do not see clearly, many things that we do not understand perfectly, but we press on, and we look for that divine helper, the Spirit of God, to indeed make these things clear to us. Our knowledge is sometimes imperfect.

We grow in grace, and we grow in knowledge of the person of Christ, the unseekable gift of God, and indeed you can go on in your search and your quest for knowledge about him, never let it be satisfied, because indeed the person of Jesus Christ is indescribable, and little wonder that the word of God uses that expression, the unseekable gift of God. There's something that's always associated with being disillusioned, though. I think all of us know something about this.

We anticipate something, and it doesn't happen, and then we get a letdown, and that's kind of unpleasant, sometimes disillusioned. So, I think these words come from the Lord Jesus as a warning that they should not allow the difficulties that they're faced with, the experiences that would be there, all of the distress that was yet in the future, to so possess their minds and their beings that they would lose their enjoyment of his person, his love, and his power. That's a constant threat even today.

The experiences of loss, the difficulties, the distressing things that happen, so often it can take away our enjoyment of the Lord. Now, you've heard the old expression, someone, how are you getting along? Well, pretty good under the circumstances. You know, someone says, you're not supposed to be under your circumstances, brother.

You're supposed to be living above your circumstances, and in Christ, you see, once we have that victory in Christ, once we realize that everything can be realized in him, and I purposely did not read the 33rd verse of this chapter, but it's a summation, I think, of what we're talking about. In this world you will have tribulation, the Lord says, but you be of good courage. You cheer up your heart, because I have overcome the world.

So, we have identified ourselves with one that is victorious. We've aligned ourselves with one that is a winner, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And I'm reminded of something that I have read in the word of God, given by the Apostle Paul, found in 2nd Timothy 1 chapter.

God has not given to us a spirit of fear. Now, God, if you have a spirit of fear in your soul, and if you are anxious about many things, you didn't get it from God. He didn't get it to you, but God hasn't given to us a spirit of fear.

He's given to us his Holy Spirit. He indwells us, he empowers us for certain, but he's given to us a power. He's given to us a spirit of power and a spirit of love.

He's given to us a sound mind. He's given to us that spirit of discernment that will help us to see these things, and to be liberated from the ignorance that sometimes prevails even among those that claim to know the Lord Jesus Christ. No question about it, the expediency of the going away of our Lord Jesus Christ, even Caiaphas, the high priest, is mentioned later there in the book of the Acts.

It is expedient for us, says that man, one that represented the people of God, that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish. That's the testimony and the account of how one man felt about the person of Jesus Christ, and yet there's darkness in the hearts of these men that surround him. Now, as we survey what we've just read, we have to say part of it is the work of the Holy

Spirit in the world.

What does he do in the world? He convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of justice, and then we're given the answer to this. He convicts the world of sin because they believe not on me. He convicts the world of righteousness because I go to my Father and he's seen me no more.

They've rejected righteousness. They wouldn't reach out and embrace righteousness when it was rightly for them. All that he stood for, everything that he represented was rejected, and the Spirit of God has convicted them of this.

Still happens in the world today. An objection, judgment that is real and sure, and will come because the world is just. Well, this is the work of the Spirit of God, and he deals with this world in which we live.

He goes to the hearts of those that are living in spiritual darkness, and this is his work. So often we may try to play the role as a soul winner in going beyond the point where God ever intended us to go. Now, faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God.

Faith comes by hearing a report, an account, and that report that comes from God, if it is believed, if it is embraced and accepted, you know, faith comes into the fold. And all we have to do is be a witness. We need to carry that message of the gospel to the world, and in a sense, once I've done that in love and under the power of the Spirit of God, what else can I do? Brother, you can't do any of that.

The Spirit of God does His work, and no man can do that work. So, in a sense, we see this wonderful work that our Lord says the Spirit of God will do in the world. But then, the last part of this passage deals with the work that the Spirit of God would do in the hearts and the lives of believers.

And there again, that takes us back to a new capability, the work of the Spirit of God in the believer's life. I don't know if you took note of that little phrase that's found in the twelfth verse, but these are the words that were spoken by our Lord. He says, I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

We've already reviewed that there were many things that they couldn't bear, so many things that they couldn't understand. You say, why? Because these things were yet future, and what our Lord is doing is speaking prophetically of the course of his own life, and they couldn't come to grips with it. And so, in the life of the believer of that time, the one that even walked right beside the Lord Jesus Christ, there are many things that I can tell you you're not able to bear.

You don't have the capability, you don't have the capacity for these things, because spiritual things are discerned by the help of the Spirit of God. You read in the Corinthian epistle that the spiritual man discerns all things, but the natural man, he has no comprehension of these things. There's foolishness unto him, he can't understand.

Well, in that sense, that does not apply here. There is a willingness in the hearts of these men to understand, but they can't understand. And our Lord sympathizes with this, and he says, there will be yet a day when you will understand.

Just at the present time, you can't understand these things, you can't take this in, you're not able to bear it. That's what he says. How do you think they would respond to the concept of Jesus Christ will die? He will be buried.

The resurrection, how would they respond to this? That he would ascend back into the heavens, and that he would promise, or they would receive a promise, just as you see in ghosts, he will come back again. Do you think all of this was a part of their thinking? Not likely, no. So, you see, you can understand, you can sympathize with them, they're not able to bear this.

They can't take it. It's their future, and they lack that true understanding of what our Lord was teaching. I believe, of course, that when it comes to divine proof, our comprehension of it is perhaps progressive.

Here's a young man or young woman that's just been saved by the grace of God. Now, his understanding of the word of God is very limited. He's got to grow, he's got to progress in his understanding, his apprehension of divine proof.

And God doesn't, in a sense, just pour into his heart and soul things that he's not able to bear. Those of us that know any little bit about the word of God, and our knowledge is sometimes so limited, and sometimes when we think we really have come to grips and understand something, then new light will be shed upon that passage, and we, in a sense, say, Thank you, Lord. But we know that there's a learning process going on.

We know that this matter of divine proof coming into the soul is indeed a divine process. It's progressive. The day we got saved, I could say it this way, we were enrolled in God's school.

And I'll tell you this, I believe personally you'll never get your diploma down here if you don't graduate from God's school. Your coronation day will be when you stand around the throne of God. As long as we're in this life, we are disciples, we are learners, we are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The very tragic thing that comes to my mind is that very often we have people that drop out. We have Christians that say, I'm satisfied with what I know. I know I'm saved.

I know I'm on my way to heaven. Thank God for it. As far as any of these other things that you get so excited about in the Word of God, well, you're just more spiritual than I am.

Something like that. You know, such a poor excuse. I shall never forget what I heard my brother Fred McKenzie say one time regarding a young man that he knew that told him when he had asked him some questions.

He said, Brother McKenzie, I'm going to be very honest with you. I just feel like that I've gone just as far as I want to go in my spiritual life in understanding all of these things that you've talked so glowingly about. This is just as far as I want to go.

I thought when he was saying this, how could that be? It comes as a shock, you know. But, you know, then the punchline was really this. My brother McKenzie said, you know, that young man had the nerve to say that.

He said that. He admitted that. The tragic thing about it is, so many of God's people are doing it.

They're doing the very same thing that this young man admitted that he was doing. I don't want to know anything else. I'm satisfied.

Too many other things in this life that take up my time, my interest, and I'm not going to just zero in on this and say that this means more to me than anything in this life. That's just being honest about it. Many

Christians today, they wouldn't say that, but they're doing their dropout, their spiritual dropout.

They don't make any progress beyond the progress that they had made from, say, six months or a year after they were saved. For a while, zeal and enthusiasm about these things, the things of God, today's enthusiasm is gone. It's lost its appeal.

And now spiritual things are relegated to a place in their life. I'll do it if it's convenient, but there are other things that occupy my time and my interest. You can only write over that.

Indeed, that is a sad commentary on the life of a Christian. To say the least. If any one of us are able to say in this room tonight, I've learned everything I want to learn about the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, all of that divine truth around that person that is labeled in the word of God as being the unspeakable gift of God.

I've learned all that I want to know about him. We're saying that we should hang our heads in shame. We should, indeed, hang our heads in shame, because, indeed, the divine truth is found in the word of God.

And you know, as you study your Bible, the word of the living God, everything revolves around that person, Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the center of this book. And you can find him in Genesis, you can find him in Revelation, indeed you will find him in eternity.

And he will be the one that we occupy our heart's affection with throughout this time. And every little bit of understanding, every little bit of knowledge that becomes mine by studying to rightly divide the word of truth, let me go after it and go after it with zeal and enthusiasm and joy in my soul that the Lord has given to me that holy comforter, the one that will teach you, the one that will instruct you, the one that will bring to your remembrance all things concerning me. And that's exactly what our Lord has told those who call upon him.

No question about it, we're in the family of God, but we are at different stages of development in our spiritual growth, and some grow faster than others. Some just go oh, ever so fast. They have minds that are able to drink in the word of God, but each one at his own pace is making some progress, and we're learning these things, and they're thrilling ourselves.

And, you know, the worshiper is one that has his soul full. You gather around the table to remember the Lord, and our worship is just a product of the soul, the heart that is just running over filled with adoration and worship and praise for the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what happens in the soul of a man that is just filled with the Spirit of God.

You just can't contain yourself. My cup indeed runneth over. My cup runneth over.

How such a beautiful thought. I think there are a few questions that we could ask at this point. How much truth that's found in the word of God concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ are you able to bear at this point in your Christian experience? In other words, someone opens the word of God to a passage, and he begins to expound the passage.

He reads it, and he takes it, and he parts it ever so minutely for you so that you can partake of it. He takes the food, and he breaks it in little pieces, and you say, I don't understand that. Well, you know, this has already happened.

The Corinthian church, which is a very carnal church, the apostle Paul said, I brought meat to you, but you couldn't take meat. You know, you were still on that milk diet, and there are some Christians today, they never get beyond the milk diet. Oh, they can lap up the milk.

They can listen to sermons from the platform, but as far as any church in the word of God for divine truth and the feeding of one's soul, they never have that experience. And, indeed, that's regrettable. We've got too many babies in the family of God.

Their stage of development as Christians, they're standing still. No, you don't stand still. You retrogress.

There's no such thing as standing still. You either press on, or you fall back. Your life becomes like a stage of poo, no refreshment for anyone, including yourself.

Therefore, it behooves each one of us to say, listen, I'm going after these things. I'm going to read my Bible. I'm going to study the word of God.

I'm going to let the spirit of God speak to my own soul about the person of Christ, enrich my life, and let me with enthusiasm go out and tell someone else about the Lord Jesus. Now, you can't do that enthusiastically unless he is first cousin to you. That's what it takes.

A divine encounter with the person of Christ. How much divine truth are you able to bear to know? I heard years ago, one of the, I think, the first Bible conference that I attended, the old Blue Ridge Bible conference up at Black Mountain, and there were some very able men there who found in the word of God. And this expression was heard, you know, all this is over my head.

And I think it was our brother Van Ryn, August Van Ryn. He made the comment as he rocked in one of those old rockers out there on the front porch. He said, I don't think it was over his head, more likely it was under his feet.

We have trampled underfoot these divine things. Because of our laziness, because of our unwillingness to come to grip with these things, so often we think it's over my head. It means that we have neglected to acquaint ourselves with that truth.

When we open the word of God as the family of God, as we assemble together in our prayer meetings, in our Bible study, we're helping each other, that's true. But after I've been saved in a length of time, I should be able to understand the things that we're handling on this book of the Bible. That doesn't mean I understand everything about it, no wild boast like that, but the Spirit of God is able to help me discern what the word of God is saying to my own soul.

This is the word of God. It was meant for me. It's not something that God is trying to hide from me.

He wants me to know. He wants me to know these things. So often we give the impression, God won't let me know these things.

He's hiding things from me. God's not hiding anything from you. But you've got to have the capability to handle divine truth, and a baby can't handle me.

That's not his job, and as long as you're a baby, period, milk's the only thing you can handle. You'll have to apply yourself to the study of the word of God, and are rightly deciding the word of truth. Then these things will become meaningful to you.

Then you'll be able to thank these things. That's how it works. Well, the next question that would follow that would be on the heels of what your presence states, how much truth do you want God to entrust to you as a believer in the Lord Jesus? By the Spirit of truth, how much do you want to know? How much do you want to know? I hear people that they read the book of Revelation.

Oh, I would like to know all of the things that are so mysterious in the book of the Revelation. Well, you can. You can know all of those things, in effect.

You can come to grips with those things, and all those mysterious symbols, all of those things that were imparted to the divine apostle John. Well, you can know those things. They can be real to you.

You'll have to read it and study. That's what you'll have to do. You'll just have to sit down with a book and say, Lord, here I am.

I want to know what this book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is saying to me. I want to know that. And you have said that the Spirit of God, that divine teacher, will make these things real to me.

Lord, open now my eyes, and I might see. And what he'll do is he'll open your eyes, and you'll read those things, and you'll understand them because you've got divine help. But do you want to know that? Or are you just fascinated in the moment of time when someone stands and preaches the Word of God, and you say, for the moment, I'm going home to get my Bible, and I'm going to study.

I want to know those things. You see, and suddenly you've been impressed with this idea that I can study and know these things. It just doesn't last long enough.

Too often, coldness and, you know, losing touch. Enthusiasm, perhaps, with which the speaker spoke of these things, we forget. And then we have to say, I'm satisfied.

I know a little. That will suffice, and we're willing to press on. But this passage tells us that the Spirit of God will guide into the truth, divine truth, surrounding the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And God wants us to know more and more about his Son every day that we live. In fact, he wants us to display the glory of God in our lives. The splendor and glory of the person of Christ, the only way that this world can possibly know the person of Christ is through you and me.

We are his witnesses to this world. Now, Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God in the heavens, and today he is speaking to this world through you and me as believers in him. We are members of his body.

We are an extension of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. He hasn't given this miniature to angels. He's given it to poor sinners, saved by the grace of God, that have a deep sense of appreciation in their souls.

The grace of God wonderfully reached my heart one day, revealed to me the person of Jesus Christ, and I've never gotten over it, and I want to tell everyone about that person, Jesus Christ. And the Spirit of God is empowering men and women today to go out and to bear testimony, give your witness concerning what Christ has done for you. You speak of him in growing terms, and in so doing by supporting all this with a life that bespeaks of the holiness of God.

Indeed, just giving lip service is not sufficient. There must be the life that is fruitful and productive. There must be that Christ-likeness enshrined upon each one of us as a witness for him.

All that God desired in that each one of us would be conformed to the image and likeness of his son. Now, you can't do that by your own self-effort, bro. The Spirit of God that indwells us, that would make us productive in Christ's life, that would produce spiritual fruitfulness in our lives, the fruit of the Spirit, it comes from its divine source, the Spirit.

And as we walk in the Spirit, we do not fulfill the lust of the flesh. You see, these things are spiritual, and to understand them we need God's help, divine help. We never operate independent of God's help.

God is our helper. We don't do any freelance operating independent from God in our service for God. There's no such thing.

Anything that brings glory to God, God gives us the strength to do it. I can do all things through Christ and his name. That's the apostle Paul.

So, indeed, I feel privileged to live in this day rather than in the day in which these disciples lived. Their knowledge was limited, there was always a threat that they might become discouraged, distressed. Our Lord warned against that.

He reminds us, the Holy Comforter will come. Though you can't bear that divine truth now, there's a day in which you will. There's absolutely no excuse for you nor for me tonight in this room if we've been saved in a length of time.

We should not be able to come to grips with these things that are found in the word of God that will enrich our lives, give us all of the joy and the happiness that God intended for his people, the deep satisfaction in our souls of knowing, unknowing, unknowing in the experience of living within every day, and being empowered by God's spirit to serve him, the Lord Jesus Christ. May we take these things to heart. Grant, we pray thee, that what the Spirit of God has impressed upon our hearts tonight will be responsive, will be very responsive, and that we'll act upon that which he directs us to do for the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus we ask this.

Shall we pray? Our Father in Heaven, we do thank thee for the word of God. We do thank thee for these words that, as we read them, they are just filled with meaning for our souls. They become special words to us because this is your message to us, and that wonderful divine comfort of the Spirit of God that makes these things real to us.

Lord, we could never discern these things apart from your help. We're shut up to thee to know these things that are so precious and dear about the person of Christ. Lord, as I dear blood-bought soul, grant, we pray thee, that we shall be determined in our own souls that we'll let the Spirit of God teach us all that he wants to teach us about the Lord Jesus Christ, for we ask this in his precious name.

Amen.

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