
The Gospel of John

Part 11 - by: Ronald L. Dart

It is fascinating that the longest discourse of Jesus in the entire New Testament, is also the most private, the most intimate, the most personal. It is the night of the Last Supper (Passover), and He's going to spend this time with His disciples, as He puts it, "Before I suffer." He enters into this evening, knowing full well, what lies ahead as He makes His way through the Last Supper, through this time of talking with His disciples, whom He has come to love, and they love Him. Male bonding hardly describes frankly the closeness that existed between He and His disciples.

Something that the disciples don't know, at this point, they don't realize that they're going to lose Him this night. They don't realize the impact it's going to have on Him. They haven't a clue where it's all going.

We look back on this and wonder why those guys don't understand this. Jesus told them this and they just didn't get it, but the fact of the matter is, there's no way anyone would've gotten it, not at that time. We have hindsight. We know the whole story. We know how it all ends up. We have looked at the end, as it were, and consequently, we understand things, that they only came to understand later on.

I haven't seen Mel Gibson's movie, 'The Passion' yet, but we're beginning to enter into that portion of the gospel that he covers, in that incredible movie he's done, 'The Passion.' Jesus has a job to do, of preparing His disciples for what's coming.

Whoever Kills You Will Think That He Does God A Service

In John 16 verse 1, Jesus says, "I've told you all this, that you should not be offended. {2} They're going to put you out of the synagogues, yet the time comes, that whoever kills you, will think he does God a service."

Now that little statement is fascinating, because it doesn't talk about the Romans killing Jesus, because the Romans didn't kill people to do God a service, they did it to do Rome a service. The Jews did it because they were rebels and were stubborn. They were a threat to Rome. The Romans when they killed somebody had a reason for it, a human reason generally speaking.

This is talking about people who think they are doing God, that is, the real God a service by killing the disciples of Jesus. He told them this before it ever happened, and it did come to pass.

"They will do these things to you," Jesus said, "because they haven't known the Father nor Me."

Of course, if they had known God, they would never have imagined that killing other disciples of God would've been a service to their God, but they didn't know that, because as Jesus said, "They don't know the Father and they don't know Me," and as He says of people, who thought they knew God, they thought they were the repository of the word of God.

"I have told you all this," Jesus said in verse 4, "that when the time shall come, you will remember that I told you, and that will strengthen you, these things I said not to you at the beginning, because I was with you. I didn't have to, {5} But now I'm going to go my way to Him that sent Me, and so far, none of you have ask Me, "Where are you going?" {6} But because I have said these things to you, well I can see by your faces that sorrow is filling your heart.

The Comforter

Verse 7 of John 16, "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I don't go away, the Comforter will not come to you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

Now it is a strange thing in a way, because Jesus is talking about the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, which apparently while it may be with them, was not going to be in them and be a part of their work and who they were, not until much later.

And so consequently, continuing in John 16 Jesus says, "The Holy Spirit is going to have to come, but if I stay here, it can't happen, because it depends on Me to send it and {8} when he has come, he will reprove the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, {9} Of sin, because they don't believe me, {10} Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more, {11} And of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. {12} I've got a lot of things to tell you, but you can't bear them now, {13} But I want you to understand this, that when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatever he hears that he shall speak and he will show you things to come."

Fascinating! "When the Holy Spirit comes, he is not only going to tell them more truth, he's going to lead them also into prophecy showing them things that are going to happen in the future. {14} He will glorify Me for he shall receive of mine and will show it to you. {15} All things that my Father has are mine, and therefore I said, "He shall take what's mine and show it to you. {16} A little while and you won't see me and again a little while and you will see me, because I go to my Father?" {17} Then the disciples said to themselves "What in the world does He mean by that? A little while you're not going to see me and then again a little while, you will see me because I go to my Father?" {18} Then the disciples said, "What is He talking about? We don't get it." {19} Now Jesus knew they wanted to ask Him about this and He said, "Do you ask among yourselves about what I said, A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while you shall see me?""

Now you and I, when we read this, we would say, He's talking about the time when He is going to die. He will be in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights (Matthew 12:40) and then they will see him after that. We see it. They didn't get it.

Disciples Will Be Sorrowful

Jesus said in verse 20 of John 16, "I tell you the truth, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

Now the image that He's presenting us here is of the condition of mind of the disciples on the afternoon of His crucifixion, His death and His burial. In the time that they have for those 3 days and 3 nights as they try in their minds to wrestle with the experiences they've had, what they have been through, what it means to them, where they're going to go with them. They are going to be deeply and profoundly sorrowful. You know what this feels like, if you've ever lost a loved one, you have gone to the funeral and you go home, and you sit there and stare at the wall, while your friends try to comfort you.

At the same time, Jesus said in verse 20 of John 16, "The world will celebrate, that is people who are not one of you are going to be pleased that I am gone. The thorn in their side has been removed and they'll be ready to celebrate, but I want you to understand this, your sorrow is going to be turned into joy. {21} A woman when she is in travail has sorrow, because her hour is come, but as soon as she is delivered of a child, she remembers no more the anguish, but has joy that a man is born into the world."

I gather that the birth process is awfully hard, and a woman has travail and work and sorrow, but then when a man is born into the world, all the joy floods in and washes away all the pain.

Jesus said, {22} "You have sorrow now, but I'll see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one will ever be able to take that away from you."

It is odd in a way that Jesus chooses the analogy of a woman giving birth to a child, because also in the Bible we find the resurrection from the dead, being a kind of birth, that a man is born into the world and Jesus will in a sense be born again by a resurrection from the dead.

You Can Pray Directly To The Father

Jesus continues in John 16 and verse 23, "In that day, you will not ask me anything. I say unto you, Whatever you ask the Father by my authority, He will give it to you. {24} Up until now you have asked nothing in my name. Now you can, you shall receive. Ask and your joy will be full. {25} Now I have told you all this in parables and proverbs, the time comes when I will no longer speak to you in that way, but I will show you plainly the Father. {26} In that day you shall ask in my name, I do not say that I will pray to the Father for you."

"Do you understand what I'm saying?" He says, up until this time you would sort of say, "We will pray to you and you speak to the Father for us. We will talk to You and You can pray for us." Jesus says, "No, that's not necessary. You can pray directly to the Father."

Jesus says in verse 27, "The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and believe that I came out from God."

So, we are not talking about an intermediary, we are talking about praying to Jesus and Jesus going to intercede with the Father, although He makes that intercession, but we can go to God, directly to the Father. We don't have to go through anyone.

Overcome The World

Let's continue in John 16 and verse 28, "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and I go to my Father." {29} His disciples said, "Well, now you're speaking plainly, {30} Now you speak no proverb, now we are sure that You know everything and need not that any man should ask you. By this we believe You came forth from God." {31} And Jesus answered, "Do you now believe? {32} Behold the hour comes, in fact it's already here, that you will be scattered every man to his own, and will leave Me alone, but I'm not alone because the Father is with me. {33} I've told you all this, that in Me, you might have peace, in the world you will have tribulation, be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."

What a statement, as long as you and I are in this world, we are going to have trouble and then Jesus tells us, "Cheer up. I've overcome the world." In fact, that's precisely what you and I are expected to do, to overcome the world.

You can substitute a word, one syllable for that three-syllable word 'overcome.' The word is 'win.' We were 'Born to Win.'

The Real Lord's Prayer

What follows in John 17 is Jesus' longest recorded prayer. The disciples are with Him and they hear this prayer on this occasion, in a sense, you might call this the real Lord's prayer. Although "Our Father which is in Heaven" is our favorite Lord's prayer.

Jesus spoke these words and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said "Father, the hour is come, glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify You. [2] As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."

Wow! Think about what Jesus just said. He's talking to God. He says "You have given Me power over all flesh. I can give eternal life to as many as you give Me, {3} And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. {4} I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work You gave me to do. {5} And now, O Father, glorify Me with your own self with the glory I had with you before the world was."

This is kind of hard to get your mind around, but what Jesus is saying here, plainly is, "I had this glory with You before the world was." I take that to mean, before this planet was even here. Jesus was with the Father and was glorified then.

"I have," Jesus said in verse 6, "manifested your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world, they were Yours. You gave them to Me and they have kept Your word. {7} Now they have known all things whatever you have given Me, they have known that they came from You. {8} For I have given them the words You gave me, they received them, and they have known surely that I came out from You and they have believed that You did send me."

The one thing in the three and half years or so that Jesus was with these men working, teaching, healing, they came to know and to believe from the core of their being that Jesus Christ came from the Father.

Verse 9, "I pray for them," Jesus said, "I don't pray for the world. I pray for them which You have given me, because they belong to You. {10} And all Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. {11} And now I am not going to be in the world any longer, but they are. I'm coming to You, Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are."

This is Jesus' prayer for us, that we, you and I, might be one as Jesus and the Father are one. That we might be one with them. Now that sense in which He is using this, I think, simply means that we would be united, that we would be of one mind, of one spirit, that we would be together in the things that we are doing. It is not some mystical togetherness in all the universe. It's a matter of speaking the same thing, thinking the same way, because we are thinking God's way, then we are on the same wavelength with each other. Jesus' prayer is that you and I would be united.

They Are Not Of This World

Continuing in verse 12 of John 17, Jesus said, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name, those that you gave me, I have kept and not one of them is lost, but the son of perdition, and that had to be to fulfill the Scripture. {13} Now, I come to you, and these things I speak in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. {14} I have given them Your word, and the world hates them."

The world hates them because they are not of the world.

"Just like Jesus is not of the world," we are not like other worldly people, and people just can't stand it.

Verse 15, "I don't pray though, that you would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them from the evil one. {16} They are not of the world, just like I'm not of the world."

Sanctify Them Through God's Truth

Verse 17 of John 17, "Sanctify them through your truth. Your word is truth."

You know, it's interesting what Jesus just said there, He said, "Sanctify them." The word 'sanctify' means something needs to be set apart from the others. And in a sense, set it apart for God. He said, "I want You to set these men apart through your word."

And then Jesus goes on to say, having said, "Sanctify them in truth, that your word is truth," and I take it from that, that we are supposed to use the 'Word of God' as that thing that ties us together, and ties us to God.

"As You have sent Me into the world," {18} "I have sent them into the world, {19} And for their sakes, I sanctify myself that they might be sanctified through the truth."

The whole thing is a holiness that we are to find in God.

Jesus said, "I set them apart, making them holy, that they might be holy through the truth. {20} I don't pray for these alone, but for them who shall believe on Me through their word."

Now what you're hearing here is, Jesus Christ's prayer for you. Because He is praying not only for His disciples, but He is praying for the people who will come to believe on Him through the word of His disciples and you, as you open the Bible and read those first four gospel accounts and come to believe on Jesus Christ, through their word, Jesus Christ prays for you!

We Have To Get Along

Continuing in verse 21 of John 17, Jesus' prayer is {21} "That they all may be one, as you Father are in Me and I in You, that they may be one in us and that the world may believe that You have sent Me."

Now you and I have a hard time settling down and accepting the sense of that prayer, because we have managed to divide ourselves so many ways as Christians from one another, that it is pretty hard to count the ways and some of the reasons why we separate ourselves, some might be important and some of them really aren't important at all. They just seem to have to do with, well, I don't want to be where you are. Maybe I don't like you. Maybe you are different from me and I don't see how it's possible that you and I can be the same.

But Jesus said, "I pray for them, that they may all be one, like You the Father are in Me and I am in You. They may be one in us that the world may believe that You sent Me."

Now that's really something, that He is praying here and sooner or later, you and I are going to have to get along. Sooner or later we are going to have to be in the same place at the same time worshiping the same God or else we are not going to be worshiping God at all.

Jesus then said, {22} "The glory that You gave Me, I have given to them, {23} I in them, that they may be perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as you have loved Me. {24} Father, I will that they also whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am that they may behold my glory, which You have given to Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

I suppose there are people who believe that God loved Jesus in the sense of looking forward in the future to when He would exist, and He would love Him then, but I don't take it that way. I think Jesus was with the Father from before the foundation of the world, in a loving relationship.

Verse 25, "O righteous Father, the world has not known You, but I have known You, and these have known that You sent Me, {26} And I have declared to them your name, and I'll keep on declaring it that the love for which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

It harkens back to Jesus' promise that if we will keep His commandments, and if we will turn to Him and will love Him, He and the Father will move in with us. What a thing to consider!

Who Are You Looking For?

John chapter 18, "When Jesus had finished His prayer, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron (Kidron), which had a garden there, which is known as the Garden of Gethsemane, and He went there with His disciples. {2} Judas, who was betraying Him at that time knew the place, for Jesus went there a lot with His disciples. {3} Judas, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. {4} Jesus knowing everything that was going to come, went out and said, "Who are you looking for?" {5} They answered and said, "Jesus of Nazareth," Jesus said, "Well, I am He." And Judas who also betrayed Him stood with them. {6} As soon as Jesus said, "I am He," they all backed up, and fell down to the ground."

That is incredible! The power that was here. Why would they do this? They all knew what they were doing. Judas knew what they were doing. They all knew who Jesus was and what a man He was. And when they actually faced Him, they couldn't stand it.

As they went backward, and they fell down, Jesus asked them again. {7} "Who are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus of Nazareth." {8} Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He, If you are looking for me, let these others go their way." {9} That the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of them which You gave Me I have lost none." "

He didn't want any of the other fellows to have to go through, what He was going through. "Take Me, let them go."

Simon Peter Drew His Sword

Continuing in verse 10 of John 18, "Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and cut off the high priest's servant's right ear." He whacked him one, a good one, "The servant's name was Malchus. {11} Jesus said, "Stop it! Put your sword back into its sheaf, the cup which my Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

Jesus knew what He had to do. He wasn't backing down from it.

The Jews Bound Jesus and Led Him to Annas

Verse 12 of John 18, "So then the band and the captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound Him. {13} And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law to Caiaphas, the high priest that same year."

Why the father-in-law of the high priest is an interesting question, but we will pass on it?

"Now Caiaphas," {14} "was the one that gave Council to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."

I guess what he meant by it was that, it is better that this man die than the Romans should have a big rebellion on their hands and the Romans take hold of this whole country.

Peter Denied Jesus Three Times

Verse 15 of John 18, "Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known to the high priest, and he went in with Jesus in the palace. He was able to go inside because he was known around there. {16} Peter stood at the door outside." Peter would come so close but not too close. "Then that other disciple that was known, came out and spoke to her that kept the door, where he brought Peter in. {17} Then the damsel that kept the door said to Peter, "Oh, you are one of that man's disciples! He said, "I am not!" {18} The servants and the officer stood there, they had made a fire of coals for it was cold and they warmed themselves and Peter stood with them and warmed himself."

This has kind of passed into our language of warming ourselves at the enemy's fire.

Continuing in verse 19 of John 18, "The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and about His doctrine. {20} Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I continually taught in the synagogue and in the temple where the Jews always resort. I have said nothing in secret. {21} Why are you asking me? Ask them that heard me, what I have said. They know what I said." {22} And when He said this, one of the officers that stood by, slapped Jesus with the palm of his hand, and he said, "Are you going to answer the high priest this way?" {23} Jesus said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why are you hitting me?" {24} Now Annas had sent Him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. {25} Simon Peter stood and warmed himself and they said to him, "Hey, you are one of Jesus' disciples." He denied it and said, "I am not!" {26} One of the servants of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "I saw you in the garden with Him!" {27} And Peter denied again and immediately the cock crowed."

And Peter remembered what Jesus had said, "Before the cock will crow, you're going to deny Me three times." You have to wonder about that. How did Jesus know? Well, He knew the cock would crow, He knew that Peter would stay close and he knew that Peter really, in the end, didn't have what it took. And so, Peter denied Christ three times.

You might think that that would be enough to get Peter thrown out from among the disciples, rejected by Christ, denied before God, that he just couldn't handle it, "You're not going to be with us any longer." Later Jesus will reconcile with Peter. Peter will go out and weep bitterly about what Jesus went through and repent. He will be forgiven and be presented with a challenge for what he is to do. It is not exactly a challenge to make up for that denial, but in the end, he also would die for the faith.

Verse 28, "Then they, the Jews, led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, the hall of judgment. It was early and they themselves didn't go into the judgment hall, they did not want to be defiled, because they still wanted to be able to eat the Passover. {29} Pilate went out to them and said, "What is the accusation against this man?" They answered and said, "If He weren't a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him unto you."

What kind of an answer is that? They were almost implying, "We shouldn't have to give you anything specific in terms of a charge of what the bad man did, then we wouldn't have brought Him here."

The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit RLDEA.com where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think the disciples were thinking when Jesus spoke to them during the 'Last Supper'?
2. Jesus was very honest to His disciples. He didn't promise them riches. He promised them that they would have trouble. How does the fact that they did eventually do what Christ said, despite all the trouble they went through, help your faith?
3. What can we learn by their lives?
4. Despite the fact that today many of God's people are scattered around in various church groups, do you feel, though, that in way we are united because we have the same goal of making it into the Kingdom of God?
5. What could we do as God's people to do a better job at becoming more united, even though, we fellowship with different groups?
6. Do you think that sometimes Christians are their own worst enemy?
7. If Jesus prayed for us, shouldn't we be praying for each other to become one, not necessarily in one major COG, but one in unity of love for each other?
8. What are your thoughts about Peter's denial of Jesus?
9. When you reread the account of Christ's life as a human, do you learn something new each time?
10. What stood out in this study of the book of John?

