

# The Heart of Christ – the message of the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17)

“...having loved His own who were in the world, He love them to the end”(John 13:1.)

## **The Comforting Savior In the provision of Christ John 14:15-26 (Part 2)**

*“15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16 I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. 20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?” 23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me. 25 These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”*

Last week we began looking at John 14:15-26 by noting that Jesus is presenting His followers what could be seen as departing gifts – that as Jesus prepares to go to the cross, to the grave, to resurrection and eventually His return to the Father in heaven, His great and continued concern is for the comfort, help and encouragement of His disciples.

In this broader context of verses, we can identify four specific provisions of Jesus, the first being the presence of the Spirit in 14:15-17; followed by our text for this morning where we see the presence of the Son in 14:18-21; and then on to the presence of the Father in 14:22-24 and finally the presence of truth in 14:25-26.

Again we saw last week how Jesus promises the provision of the presence of the Holy Spirit to all those who follow Him; the Holy Spirit who is to be recognized as a Helper, Comforter, Defender, Guide, Teacher and Empowerer that is just like Jesus. Jesus assured these first disciples and in effect us as well, by confirming that His death on the cross would not end His activity on the earth, but rather it would accelerate it and it would be the ministry or function of the Holy Spirit to provide the people of Jesus with all the spiritual resources Jesus had provided for His little band of disciples.

This morning then we move on to see this second great promised provision of Jesus. A provision for the people of Jesus that seems at one level an impossibility, a contradiction of sorts. For Jesus had been alluding to His coming death and then departure from this world to be with the Father. The great concern of the disciples is the lack of having Jesus with them. Jesus tells the disciples that He is leaving them back in 14:3. And yet, with all this said, Jesus here in John 14:18-21 promises His own presence to be with them in the days to come. How can this be? How can Jesus both leave and be present with His disciples? Such a question is answered in our text, but such an answer also leads us to begin our look at these verses with the following proposition –

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**To truly know the presence of Jesus in one's life is a constantly life-transforming experience.**

In other words, if we are truly experiencing the reality of Emmanuel, of God with us, of the very presence of Christ in us, then the proof of that experience is a life that is constantly transforming, of conforming of being metamorphosed into a more striking resemblance of the life of Jesus Christ. It is truly the ugly worm being change in the cocoon into the beautifully adorned butterfly. To be in the presence of Jesus is not a static or stagnant experience but rather is dynamic and vigorous. Beloved, a person cannot rightly say he knows Christ, cannot rightly say he is in the presence of Christ without being unmoved, without also simultaneously being changed. Jesus is not in the business of keeping or allowing His people to remain as they are now, but is in the business of making them, transforming them, presenting them spotless and blameless before God. Jesus is not in the business of making bad people good and good people better, but rather is in the business of making dead people alive...alive to God and alive in God and alive for God. This is the promise of the provision of Jesus...a life transformed.

In our text we see Jesus continuing to make reference to provisions for believers who genuinely follow after Him. There are at least four such provisions or promises that we can glean from these verses, the provisions of comfort, of consecration, of communion and of confirmation. The presence of Jesus in one's life provides the believer with these things, so let us now consider them...

## I. **Comfort that lasts (14:18)**

*I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

Let us never forget the broad context of John 14, namely that it is a chapter about comfort, about hope when things are dark, about joy in the midst of the most trying of circumstances. Remember the opening words of this chapter? **“Do not let your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me.”** Jesus will say something very similar again in 14:27, saying **“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”** Well now, I must admit that I have often had a troubled heart and have found myself fearful – but I seem to be in common company, for even with these words of Christ spoken to these disciples in the Upper Room, they would yet experience, for a time, troubled and fearful hearts...that is until they came to understand, to know and to experience the reality of truth expressed by Jesus in these verses – the peace granting; joy inspiring experience of the presence of Christ even in the midst of His apparent absence.

Having just promised the coming and presence of the Holy Spirit in the previous verses, this Helper/Comforter, Jesus begins His next statement with the words, **“I will not leave you as orphans...”** Jesus is not unaccustomed to seeing His followers as **“little children”** and did so back in John 13:33. Children can become easily frightened and fearful. Have you ever experience a small child who is lost in a mall or in some large public place? That child can be frantic and even hard to reason with. Jesus knows that His disciples will feel like lost children in the next few hours (and truthfully we all have our times of feeling lost, don't we)? And the words of Jesus are these... “I will not at any time, under any circumstances leave you as orphans.” The word **“orphans”** does mean specifically to be parentless and therefore unprotected or unguarded. More broadly however, the word **“orphans”** here could also be understood to mean, helpless, deserted, or...listen...comfortless. Jesus says, “I will not leave you comfortless or helpless.” How is this?...He has already promised the Holy Spirit to be their helper and

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comforter. The idea to be grasped by the disciples and for every believer is that Jesus does not leave His people stranded.

The other day, after realizing our cell phones had outlived their ability to function correctly, Laura and I went to the “cell phone store – ATT” and began looking at getting some new phone that would meet our needs and budget. But it is a bit of process both to pick out a phone and then to get those new phones up and running. And one of the phones we chose was not in the store and so the representative had to go a few miles up the road to get it. While all this was taking place, Laura had to make another appointment and so we decided that I would wait at the store for both the representative to return and then also Laura to pick me up. Well, I was there for about an hour waiting and I was stranded, having had no lunch, no money and to top it off, Laura still had her old phone that decided again not to work, so I couldn’t even call her to get a status report. For a hour I sat at AT&T, watching people, staring at phones and going slightly crazy. Some of you might relate to what that is like...it really wasn’t earth shattering, but I didn’t like the feeling of being stuck there.

Well now, spiritually speaking, Jesus promises His followers that they are never stuck, never stranded. He makes a promise to them and says, I will not leave you as orphans and then adds, **“I will come to you.”** Here is an interesting and seemingly contradictory statement. Jesus is leaving, but He says He will come to them? How will He do this? Jesus doesn’t say specifically how He will be present with them in this verse, we will see this later, but He promises them the provision of His presence...saying I will come to you. The idea behind this verse is not simply that Jesus would come to them at some point in the future, but that He was already in the process of coming; that by means of His life, His death and His resurrection, He was present and would continue to be present with His own.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are to understand this truth – we are to live our life in light of this truth. I know this verse does reference the presence of Christ directly, but the principle is the same – in 1 Corinthians 3:16 the apostle Paul tells the congregation at Corinth, **“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”** And one of the ideas or lessons we might glean is this – what are some things you would not even think of doing in the church, or saying around God’s people? But do you find yourself thinking, doing, or saying any of these things at other times? We can quickly forget that we are not stranded, we are not parentless, that Jesus is with us wherever we go. This ought to temper our behavior to be sure. But we are also to find comfort, to find our help, to find our motivation for continuing on in life, for continuing on in a life of praise and gratitude to God, even in the hardest of times because we have this promise of the presence of Jesus in and with us and there will never be a time that we do not have this presence...it is truly a comfort that lasts.

## II. Consecration of life (14:19)

*After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.*

But in addition to this comfort that lasts, in John 14:19 we see the second provision, that provision being a consecration of life. A consecration, a setting aside for noble and godly purposes your life.

Jesus begins this second consideration of ours by first making an allusion, another reference to His pending death and subsequent resurrection. When Jesus says, **“After a little while the world will no longer see Me...”** we are to understand that the hostile world that will hang Him on the cross will think they are done with Him and will see Him no more after His death.

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But Jesus says to His disciples, **“but you will see Me...”** which I take to be both literal as well as spiritual. Three days after Jesus died, He did in fact, physically, bodily raise from the dead (a stunning miracle) – and we know that the disciples including some 500 followers of Jesus did in fact literally see Him. But I also believe that the idea here is that we see Jesus with eyes of faith, that though we have not seen Him (with physical eyes), says Peter, we love Him and though we do not see Him now but believe in Him, we rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of our faith the salvation of our souls.

But just exactly what is to be the result this belief, this rejoicing this “joy inexpressible?” Beloved...I will say to you again...it is a transformed life; a consecrated life; a life that is constantly dedicated to Jesus, constantly longing to imitate Jesus. For notice what Jesus says next in our text...**“because I live, you will also live.”** We know that Jesus died on the cross as the substitute for the sins of His people. To truly believe on Jesus is to know in your heart that He paid your debt due to your sin on the cross. It is to be able to say, “It was my sin, my rebellion, my disregard for God that nailed Jesus to the cross.” And according to the word of God, Jesus died with reference to sin, so that the spiritual death caused by sin might be abolished and that for those who believe Jesus died for them, it would be as if they died with reference to sin along side of Jesus. If you would turn to Romans 6, I think we see in these opening verses of the chapter this very idea of being dead to sin because of the death of Christ and being alive to God because of the life or resurrection of Christ.

**1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

We can only consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God if we believe that Jesus truly died for our sins and was truly raised to life from the dead. Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we are to be consecrated, set apart to God. The idea here is that more and more our thinking is being transformed so that we have the mind of Christ; that more and more of our time is being redeemed so that we live and labor for Christ. Does this describe the life-transforming experience of your soul? This is the provision of Christ; this is the comfort of Christ; this is our consecration to Christ, that because He lives to the glory of the Father, we too now live and must live increasingly to the glory of God the Father.

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### III. Communion with the Lord (14:20)

*In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*

As we move on to verse 20 we find the third promised provision granted to us in the presence of the Son in our lives; we have communion with the Lord. The word communion is sometimes thought of no more deeply than to be a reference to the Lord's Table. But communion with the Lord is truly a marvelous; a wondrous thought...that we who by *birth* and by *nature* were *enemies to God* now have something in common, something that unifies and unites us to God...that something being a someone...the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is our peace, our reconciler, the one who unites us to God.

How do we get this idea of communion from verse 20? Jesus says, "***In that day...***" which seems to be a reference not to a specific day per say, but rather a timeframe, that timeframe being after the resurrection and giving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost...that "in..not 'on' but 'in' that day...you will know [by experience...something will be confirmed]...that I am in My Father [meaning that since Jesus said He would ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit when He got to heaven (v. 16), the actual coming of Spirit would prove that Jesus was in His Father or in communion with the Father. But additionally, Jesus says not only that will His own communion with the Father be proved, but the coming of the Spirit would also prove that we are in communion with the Son...that we have the presence of the Son. There is in these verses truly the idea that all three persons of the Godhead are with us, that we are in communion with them all. How so? Because of the unity of the Godhead, namely that the Father, Son and Spirit are all one God; that Jesus and the Spirit whom the Father sends in the name of His Son, though they are real and distinct persons, are yet so indissolubly united that where the Spirit is, there is Christ, and where Christ is, there is the Father and where the Father and Son are, there is the Spirit. I believe we see the apostle Paul teaching this idea of communion of being one with God in Romans 8:11-17

***11 But if the Spirit of Him [God – the Father] who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [because I live, you will live also – the consecration of John 14:19] 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.***

Beloved, this communion with the Godhead, with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is to be an experience...in the day that the Holy Spirit comes upon you; being at Pentecost for the first disciples and the day in which a person is saved – you are to experience, to know, to have your life transformed by the truth that God is in you, working in you, making you more and more like Christ? This again is the proof of the presence of the Son in your life, you know the truth of the Trinity and your life is being changed by God's working in you.

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## IV. Confirmation of love (14:21)

*He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.*

So, we have seen that the promised provision of the presence of the Son is to bring a comfort that lasts, to bring a consecration of life and a communion with the Lord. Finally then we see that this presence of the Son in the life is to bring a confirmation of love. [read text].

Not that the other verses have not been practical and applicable, but this verse give us the most specific way of knowing the reality of the presence of Jesus in our lives. To sum it up before looking at it more closely, I would say this about verse 21, that *a life of obedience to the teachings and ways of Jesus is a sure confirmation of the special, salvific love of God toward a believer as well as the sure confirmation of a genuine love on the believer's part to both God the Father and God the Son.* Once again we see the transformational aspect of the presence of Jesus in the believer's life. It is both a love demonstrated to God by the life of the believer as well as a love demonstrated by God to the believer.

Let us note first this love to God as demonstrated by the obedient life of the believer. Jesus said, **“He who has my commandments...”** meaning...he who has, or possesses, who truly understand and enjoys the teaching, the precepts the directives of Jesus, who sees them as not simply a duty but also a delight...and then going on He said, **“and keeps them...”** – the word keep meaning to “hold fast, to guard, watch over or protects” them – that is; is in active practice and application of the teaching of Jesus....it is this one, Jesus says, who loves – who seeks for the highest good of Jesus regardless of the cost...this one loves Jesus. In other words, we prove our love to Jesus by being obedient to Him. Just as we read in John 14:15, **“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”** The implication is that you know what Jesus expects and....you practice what Jesus expects. It is not enough to be a hearer of the word only, but also a doer of the word. Do you practice the precepts of Jesus? Do you pray as you ought; love as Jesus loves you; let your light shine as Jesus commands you; avoid even the appearance of sin? Is your life being transformed day by day so that you live more and more according to the life of Christ? This is the only way we can know we love Jesus. By this the our love to Jesus and to God is confirmed.

But not only is our love to Jesus and to God confirmed by our obedience, but God's love toward us is confirmed to us by our obedience. The believer's obedience is a paradoxical thing, for we must obey, but the Scriptures also teach us that apart from the working of God in our lives; apart for the presence of the Spirit of Christ in us, we will not obey as we ought and therefore we will not love as we ought. So, how can we know the love of God? We experience the love of God toward us; knowing His presence in us as we see the obedience of Christ working in us. We see this dual working out of our obedience in Philippians 2:12-13

***12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.***

***Galatians 2:20 [Obedience as the work of Christ in us]***

***I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.***

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## **Galatians 5:16 [Obedience commanded to us]**

***But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.***

Do you wish to experience the depth and riches of the love of God in your life? Then cry out to Jesus, that He would live out His life in you and that you would desire and delight to obediently see Christ living in you...this is the transformational life to which believers are called to - but also to which Jesus promises to you. The love of God; the knowledge of God; the very person of God will be, as Jesus says in John 14:21, He will disclose to you. The word disclose there means to make known not only in words, but also to appear physically before others.

## **Hebrews 9:24**

***For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us...***

O blessed thought, that Jesus loves His own enough to make such a promise to us, that His presence would be with us, by His Spirit and by His Word in the present and one day, perhaps soon, to behold Him with our own eyes. Do you look forward to seeing Him you have sought to obey, you have longed to love, by whom you have been so graciously blessed? Is not this a thought of comfort? Does this not motivate the heart to consecration, Christ-likeness? Does this not make you awe and the wonder and grace of communion with God? Does this not encourage you to love God and to experience the love of God. This is the transformational power of the presence of Christ...may it be increasingly the experience of each one today as we seek to live in the presence of Him who died for our sins, who said to those who follow Him, "***because I live, you will also live.***"

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*Soli Deo Gloria*

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