

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 – Precious Promises (Part 2) John 14:25-31

John 14:28-31

28 You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. 30 I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; 31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

This morning I promise to finish out John 14. In the final words of this chapter we find Jesus authenticating various aspect of what it is He has been saying and teaching the disciples. Before we look specifically at how Jesus validates His work and message, let us note from John 14:27 the apparent mental and emotional state of the disciples. It would appear that even after all the promises made, the promise of the coming Helper, the *Paraclete*, God the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower them for service; even with the promise of the influence of the both the Father and in Son in their lives; and even with the promise of the giving of the perfect peace of Jesus Christ, this total confidence and rest in both one’s relationship to God as well as the working of God in their lives, the disciples yet, according to verse 27, were what? They were both troubled and fearful.

The opening words of John 14:28 read more like a rebuke... **“You heard that I said to you, I go away, and I will come to you...(the reference to His pending death, resurrection and then departure to heaven – then He says) - If you loved me (if you were seeking My highest good and glory), you would have rejoiced.”** Here then the disciples are being rebuked for not *really* hearing what Jesus had been teaching them, for if they had, they would be rejoicing at Jesus departure. Of course this begs the question, why would they *not* be rejoicing?

We might like to think or suggest something quite noble at this point. Perhaps the disciples were just so sad at the thought of Jesus leaving them. Some of you can relate. I know how my wife and kids get when they have a visit with family or some dear friend. When the time comes for them to go, to get in that car and drive off, or get on that plane and it is uncertain when we might see them again, there is a heaviness, a sadness that permeates the atmosphere for a time. No one would fault my family for being a bit sad at such a departure and likewise, who could fault the disciples for being sad at the prospect of Jesus leaving?

The problem is, the sadness of the disciples is probably not so simply motivated. In the verses before us this morning, we find Jesus expressing just what His death and resurrection *meant* to Him - and the truth is that not one of the disciples had grasped the significance of the cross from the viewpoint of Jesus. For Jesus, who for the joy set before Him, would endure the cross so that He might once again be with His Father. Rather than seeing the cross from the divine perspective, the disciples were sadly self-absorbed, self-focused, self-centered, in short, they were addicted to themselves, to their hopes, to their dreams, to their plans. For on one hand the disciples were remarkable men. They had forsaken all to follow Jesus. They had rightly seen Him as Israel’s long awaited Messiah, for He was. Only their *definition* of Messiah and the deliverance He would bring differed from what Jesus was bringing. They were hoping for Jesus

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.)

to overthrow the Roman stranglehold on Israel, restoring to the Jews their sovereignty, their glory and power. Remember that just before they partook of the Lord's Supper what they were arguing about? They were arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. They were arguing about who would have the most important positions in Jesus' kingdom.

As they began to realize that Jesus was not offering this kind of deliverance, but rather a deliverance from the power of sin, sin that separated them from their God, that Jesus, rather than ruling and reigning would suffer and die at the hands of the Romans, they responded with shock, trembling and fear. Why? Was it because they were concerned about Jesus? Certainly they cared deeply for Jesus, but most of their trouble and fear was as a result of seeing the departure of Jesus as an incomparable loss. As one preacher aptly put it, *“The disciples were troubled in part because their faith was weak. But beyond that, their anxiety stemmed from selfish shortsightedness.”*¹

So then, when Jesus begins with this rebuke, reminding them to consider what they had heard from His own mouth, He also reminds them that true love looks for the good and glory of others. And Jesus, being the Son of God, the One who has come down from heaven, longed to be once again with the Father. If the disciples would have considered the parting of Jesus from this perspective, they would rejoice, but at the moment they were too inward focused.

This serves to remind us how easy it is to get our focus on ourselves. Even in the midst of our professions and confessions of loving the Lord; even in our taking time to be with the Lord be it personally or corporately, let us be wary of doing such things merely for self; that we might be okay, that we might be respected in the eyes of others rather than being ultimately concerned that Jesus be glorified - and that we would rejoice whenever and however Jesus is glorified.

For if God does work all things for the good of those who love Him, then let us be wary of complaining in our hardships, but try to see, as best we can, how Jesus will be glorified in our afflictions, in our setbacks and when things don't seemingly go according to our plans. Sometimes we are don't act any better than the disciples. We want deliverance from our earthly, temporal captors; sometimes people, sometimes circumstance. Sometimes Jesus will deliver from such things, when it brings Him glory to do so. Sometimes Jesus does not because it will still bring Him glory. Let us not fail to long for the great and eternal deliverance secured on the cross...deliverance from the power of sin; from the curse of death. How do our momentary light afflictions on this earth compare to the eternal weight of glory we have because of our relationship to Jesus Christ; because of the peace He has bestowed on us who believe; because of our hope of eternal life? If our trials and hardships and difficulties begin to consume us, to take over our hearts, to cause us to grieve rather than rejoice, then we are not seeking to see things from the divine perspective. And how often do such lesser things bog us down?

So then after this rebuke of sorts, that the disciples should be looking at the parting of Jesus from the divine perspective, I see from the words of Jesus four validations of the life and ministry of Jesus, validations that are to bring the divine perspective of the death and resurrection of Jesus to light and when we start to see things from God's perspective, there is a joy that can be ours; then we experience the peace that Jesus promised; then we realize the presence and working of God in our lives. So then, I submit to you that the parting of Jesus from the disciples to the Father via the cross would validate or authenticate these four things...

¹ MacArthur, John. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21; p. 135

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.)

- I. His incarnation (John 14:28)
- II. His instruction (John 14:29)
- III. His impeccability (John 14:30)
- IV. His intention (John 14:31)

Let us consider these now one by one as to what exactly is being authenticated and then note an application we might draw. The parting of Jesus from the disciples to the Father via the cross would authenticate...

I. His incarnation (14:28)

You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

When Jesus said, **“I go to the Father...”** He is reminding His disciples and we are reminded of a couple of glorious truths. The first truth is the humiliation of Jesus. Jesus truly humbled Himself by the incarnation – that is “in the flesh”. The one who was by nature and all eternity is God, took on flesh like a garment and became a man while never ceasing to be God. The one who dwelled eternally face to face with God and experienced all the indescribable glories of heaven, left such a paradise to dwell in this sin-cursed, sin-infested world as the sinless one. The one who was eternally self-sufficient lived in a humble state experiencing fatigue, hunger, thirst and suffering. And as Jesus comes to the end of His humiliation, He expresses His longing to go home to the Father. Do we not get this sense of the longing of Jesus to return to His pre-incarnate state from John 17:1, 5?

1 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You...Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Jesus was longing for that for which He had know for all eternity...the face-to-face fellowship with the Father. And what is at stake here is this: if Jesus truly was God in the flesh, the God-man, Emmanuel – God with us - then the Father would confirm this truth by having Jesus fulfill the purpose for which He came, which was to save His people from their sin by dying on the cross, and raising Him gloriously, miraculously from the dead and then seeing Him return to His glory. This is the very testimony of Paul in Romans 1:1-4; listen...

1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh (a son of flesh, of the order of man, a son of David), 4 who was declared the Son of God (of the order of God) with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord...

Why did Jesus die? Why did Jesus rise from the dead? Why did Jesus ascend to the right hand of the Father? All to prove, to authenticate that God has indeed come to us; that He has provided for our salvation; He has sent His Son so that whoever would believe in Him should not perish but have eternal life. This should cause us to rejoice! This truth, the truth that the death,

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resurrection and ascension of Christ proves all that He has said and promised, should be the root that turns all troubled and fearful hearts to rejoice in the promises of God.

When Jesus says, **“because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I...”** He is not saying that He is somehow inferior or less than God. Jesus has already affirmed His deity a number of times in this Gospel saying for example in John 10:30, **“I and the Father are one”** (that is of the same essence – equal in deity). Jesus is not referring to His essence here, but rather is speaking of His current position as the Savior, His submissive role during His ministry on the earth. Jesus, had for a time, been made a little lower than the angels according to Hebrews 2:7, but according to the entire book of Hebrews and to Colossians 1 and numerous other passages, Jesus has been exalted, glorified and restored to His previous position among the Godhead.

Beloved, when trials and troubles attempt fill your soul; and they will be relentless in their pursuit, remember that although your troubles may be great and perhaps even painful, and perhaps beyond compare to what others around you experience, they will not compare to the glory that awaits you, if you are in Christ; therefore we can rejoice in tribulation; when we have this perspective of the cross; that the incarnation, that Emmanuel, God with us, has indeed taken place and we rejoice in the Lord, and rejoice in the benefits of the Lord, the salvation of our souls.

So then, first, the parting of Jesus to the Father via the cross would authenticate the incarnation of Jesus, but secondly it would authenticate...

II. His instruction

Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.

Let us remember that the disciples had been with Jesus; hearing the instruction and teaching of Jesus for some three and a half years. In the course of that time, the disciples had made several professions of believing Jesus to be the Messiah. In John 6:67-68, after many so-called disciples had left Jesus because of His hard teachings, Jesus asked the twelve if they wanted to go away as well. Peter, speaking on behalf of the twelve responded saying, **“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”** They knew Jesus was the giver of life. In Matthew 16 we have the famous response of Peter on behalf of the twelve to the question of Jesus, **“Who do you say that I am?”** – the response, **“You are the Christ – the Messiah, the Son of the living God!”** (16:15).

But even with these bold professions, we find the disciples once again filled with doubt and revealing the weakness of their faith. To bolster their faith, Jesus reminds them of what He has said, so that when it would come to pass, their faith might be strengthened. We see an example of this back in John 2. In verses 19-21 Jesus is predicting His death, something that He spoke beforehand, but also something they did not understand, for note with me John 2:22 which says,

So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed [they had increased faith in] the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

The disciples, like every well-versed Jew, knew that ultimately only God could predict the future. They were quite familiar with passage in Isaiah like:

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

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Isaiah 46:9-10

9 Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

Isaiah 48:3, 5

3 I declared the former things long ago And they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass...5 Therefore I declared them to you long ago, Before they took place I proclaimed them to you, So that you would not say, 'My idol has done them, And my graven image and my molten image have commanded them.'

And so, when the disciples saw the fulfillment of the predictions of Jesus, their faith was strengthened and they believed that Jesus was indeed God in the flesh. Beloved, does this not all serve to remind us how blessed a gift are the Scriptures? We hold before the very words of God to man – this is God speaking to you. God is speaking to us in and through these words. We have the very predictions of Jesus along with the proofs of those predictions coming to pass. Jesus spoke these things beforehand so that we might, like the disciples, might believe, that by reading them our faith might increase and as our faith increases, so our lives become more and more conformed to Jesus, as we live more and more like Jesus. The instruction, the teachings, the ways of Jesus have been authenticated by His ascending into heaven. Do you now live in the joy and delight of His teachings?

At our last Faith and Theology breakfast, we noted this question from our study, “Do you think you would pay more attention if God spoke to you from heaven or through the voice of a living prophet than if He spoke to you from the written words of Scripture? Would you believe or obey such words more readily than you do Scripture?” Wow...how many of us would find it comforting, encouraging and perhaps a bit excitingly awesome to have such an experience! But be wary that we do not so diminish and find so dull the Scriptures. This is God speaking to you! This is the instruction, the teaching of Jesus to you – let us rejoice and respond by delving in deeper and longing all the more to hear and heed the instruction of Jesus.

So first the parting of Jesus to the Father via the cross would authenticate the incarnation of Jesus; second it would authenticate the instruction of Jesus and now third, it would authenticate...

III. His impeccability (14:30)

I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

[Read Text]. Here we see a reference to the impeccability of Jesus. The word impeccability might be a bit different or foreign to some of you. The impeccability of Jesus refers to the truth that Jesus could not and did not sin while in the flesh. As Jesus continues on, He says, “***I will not speak much more with you...***” which is simply a reference to the fact that His time on the earth was drawing to a close. Then we find Jesus noting that “the ruler of the world is coming” – a reference to Satan and those whom Satan had influence or indwelt to betray, arrest and crucify the King of glory. In just a few moment, Judas, the Jewish leaders and the Roman soldiers would come and take Jesus away.

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

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Remember that Satan had from the very beginning of Jesus' ministry sought to tempt Him and lead Him astray from His mission. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness; Satan, through the religious leaders, sought to discourage and dissuade Jesus throughout His ministry. And now, Satan perceives from his perspective what seems to be a means for his own victory. All men and sinners and the wages of sin is death. By crucifying the Son of Man, Satan somehow conceived the idea that death would keep him even as it had kept all men. And perhaps even the disciples had some concerns about the prospect of Jesus dying. Although Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, who, they might have thought, would deliver Jesus from the clutches of death?

And here then Jesus reminds the disciples of something remarkable, something that changes the whole equation. Of Satan Jesus says that **“he has nothing in me.”** This is actually a Hebrew idiom, a way of saying that Satan had no legal claim against Jesus. According to God's Word, the wages of sin is death, and it is Satan who holds at current the power of death according to Hebrews 2:14; but Satan has no claim; Satan can point to no sin in Jesus by which he might hold Jesus in death. This is the impeccability of Jesus – He had no sin. And because He had no sin, He could defeat Satan, conquer death and then, because God determined it to be so, He could give to all who trust in Him His victory over death. The author of Hebrews puts it this way in 2:14-18 saying,

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

If we love Jesus, we would rejoice that He departed to the Father via the cross; for through His sinless, impeccable sacrifice on the cross, not only did He return to glory, but He also secured the only way to glory – to be found in Him; that is to be made like Him, fit for heaven, made sinless. And while we are not sinless in practice at this time, we will be. Of the rejoicing this ought to cause, that one day we will be made like Him for we shall see Him as He is. And in the meantime, I labor and strive to live by the power of His grace; to strive to live in holiness, in godliness, in Christ-likeness. Christ was sinless, the devil had nothing in Him and in Him the devil has nothing in us.

So first the parting of Jesus to the Father via the cross would authenticate the incarnation of Jesus; second it would authenticate the instruction of Jesus; third it would authenticate His impeccability and fourth and finally, it would authenticate...

IV. His intention (14:31)

but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

[Read Text] When we speak of the intention or purpose of the coming of Jesus, we do rightly note verses like Matthew 1:21 in which Joseph was commanded to name the son of Mary, Jesus, **“for He shall save His people from their sins.”** We call to mind verses like Luke 19:10 in which Jesus Himself says, **“For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was**

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

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lost.” These and other verses like these clearly teach us that the purpose of Christ coming was for the salvation of sinners who would believe in and on Him. And while we know this, there is another and perhaps even more important reason or intention for the coming of Jesus into the world to save sinners; that intention being the glorifying and exaltation of God. In John 17:4, Jesus says, “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.” In Philippians 2:8-11, that great passage that tells us that Jesus, the Son of God, became man and become obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross did all of this “to the glory of God the Father.”

The Son of God became the Son of Man to show the sons of men that their greatest duty and delight is to glorify God the Father. And Jesus demonstrated not only obedience, but also then His love for the Father by doing exactly as the Father commanded Him. This idea of obedience being the expression of love has been a theme of John 14. Jesus said in 14:15, **“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”** He repeated this theme in verses 21, 23-24. And now, He says in effect to His disciples, see how I have demonstrated My love to the Father. I have sought the Father’s highest good and glory” by keeping His commandments. The obedience of Jesus to the Father then becomes our standard by which we must practice and measure our love and obedience to Christ. The intention of Christ was to show the world how truly loving God is obeying God and now it is to be our intention to show the world how truly loving God the Father is by loving and obeying the Son. The essential test of love to God is obedience to God. Jesus passed the test with flying colors. Of course we stumble and fall, but is obedience to Christ your intention; to show the world the power of God at work in you?

In the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus we find His intention, His purpose to glorify God fulfilled; we find His impeccability, His sinlessness confirmed; we find His instruction and teaching affirmed and we find His incarnation, His becoming man – God in the flesh to be validated. And working back up to verse 28 of our text, if we truly love Jesus, if we are truly seeking His highest good and glory, then we must not only know, but also find the authentication of His incarnation, His instruction, His impeccability and His intention as our cause for rejoicing in God and communicating the gospel of God.

Do such truths cause you to rejoice? Do you long to hear the truths of Jesus in such a way that they strengthen your faith and help you experience the reality of the peace give by Jesus Christ? Let us hear and speak of them in our worship services? Let us hear and speak of them to one another; let us hear and speak of them to our families; let hear and speak of them throughout the week. Let us hear and think of them personally in our own quiet time so that we might come to delight in such things to the glory of God.

Soli Deo Gloria

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