

The Upper Room (John 14)

John 14.12-21: The Promise of the Comforter

v.20: 'At that day' clearly refers to the day of Pentecost; the day the Holy Spirit was given. Then the disciples would be brought into the full consciousness of the **union** between Father, Son and every believer. The phrase 'I am in' further suggests *communion, unity* of mind and a place of *affection*. In the day of the Spirit, believers would recognise the union of a glorified, risen Son with His Father (cf. Colossians 3.3), and the union of a glorified, risen Saviour with each believer. We are in Christ, i.e. we stand before God in all the merit of the Person and work of Christ and He is in us, i.e. His life and character is communicated through us (cf. Colossians 1.27).

v.21: This union between the Lord Jesus and His people is characterised by *obedience* on their part. This is the **proof of love** for Him. Believers are to 'fully grasp with the mind' ('hath') and 'fully integrate into one's way of life' ('keepeth') the commandments¹ of the Lord Jesus. Are we obedient to them? Obedience is not optional, but is the proof and test of love. Faith is the root of which obedience is the beautiful flower and fruit. The believer that lives in this way will enjoy the conscious *knowledge* and *experience* of the love of the Father and Son. God's love² for us never changes, but our appreciation and enjoyment of it can. Furthermore, an obedient Christian will enjoy clear spiritual manifestations of the glories of His Person, through the indwelling power of the Spirit. The word 'manifest' in Greek is *emphanizo*, suggesting more than a mere appearance. It carries the thought of a disclosure of what the Person is in His own nature, character, counsel and work. **Leckie:** *This manifestation to us now by the Spirit, is far greater than His manifestation to the disciples when He was with them physically and personally. Having the Spirit would reveal to them many things about the person of Christ that they could not understand or perceive when He was here (2.22; 12.16; 14.26).*

John 14.22-24: The Personal Manifestation of Christ

vv.22-24: The thought of a spiritual manifestation to His own was beyond the comprehension of Judas. He could only think in terms of a material, earthly and physical kingdom which required the visible, public manifestation of the Messiah. His question in Greek is literally: 'What has happened that you are about to manifest yourself to us and not to the world?' The simple answer of the Lord Jesus is that He will manifest Himself to His people because they love Him and keep His word (v.23). He does not manifest Himself to the world (at this time) because they do not love Him, neither do they keep His sayings (v.24). **v.23:** Clearly then, the spiritual manifestation of the Lord Jesus to individuals is conditional (note the use of the word 'if'). As we scrutinize our deeds, if we are honest, we have to acknowledge that we have 'kept his word' very imperfectly; yea, it seems to us, that we are not entitled to say that we have 'kept' it at all. But the Lord looks behind the deeds, and knows the longings within us. Peter's actions had contradicted his profession of love, but the Lord knew Peter's heart (John 21.17). The spiritual manifestation of v.21 is now expanded to embrace the Father and Son both making their 'abode' with the believer. It has ever been God's desire to dwell with His people (Exodus 25.8). What will be fully realised in the eternal state (Revelation 21.3) is anticipated by believers now. Is there a more wondrous statement in Scripture? Here are divine persons dwelling alongside (*para*) and enjoying fellowship with the individual believer. The truth of the believer being indwelt by God is taught elsewhere by John (1 John 4.15). The word 'abode' is only used elsewhere in 14.2 ('mansions'). Divine persons have 'made a habitual and permanent home' with the believer. **v.24:** For emphasis, the truth of v.21 is stated negatively in v.24.

John 14.25-31: The Proclamation of Peace

These verses conclude the teaching of John 13 & 14. John had begun by stating that the hour of Jesus' departure to the Father was at hand (13.1). Now the crisis point for the eleven had arrived. His soon departure is emphasised and yet, graciously, He speaks of the abundant provision available to them during the time of His absence. The Lord speaks of His *past* ministry (vv.25, 28, 29) and *future* provision (v.26). He would provide for their: *ignorance* (v.26); *fear, weakness* (v.27); *sadness* (v.28) and *unbelief* (v.29). The disciples would remain the object of divine interest upon the earth.

vv.25-26: 'These things' refers to His teaching that evening whilst He was still *alongside* them physically for the last time. There is a simple contrast with the Holy Spirit that would teach them 'all things' (v.26). Although there are principles to be applied, strictly speaking v.26 is apostolic. **Carson:** *This verse is to explain to readers at the end of the first century (and us!) how the first witnesses, the first disciples, came to an accurate and full understanding of the truth*

¹ Note the difference between 'my commandments' (v.21); 'my words' (v.23) and 'my sayings' (v.24). **My commandments** = the disciple's directions for life and every step of the pathway. **My word** (singular) = His word as a whole. Not simply His *own* word, but the **Father's** which sent Him, i.e. all that He made known of the Father's heart/counsel. **My sayings** (plural) = the words of Christ (divine truth) in their *individual* details.

² **Leckie:** Broadly speaking, the love of **God** is always towards the *world* (John 3.16); the love of the **Father** is always towards His *children*; the love of the **Son** is towards the *individual* (Galatians 2.20), the love of **Christ** is towards the *church* (Ephesians 5.25).

of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the great teacher, and thus His *moral* character is emphasised. He is sent 'in the name' of the Lord Jesus (implying His absence), that is, as His *representative*, in His *interests* and with His *authority*. The Spirit is here not to exalt believers, but Christ! The *Father* sent the Son to represent **His** interests (5.23, 43); now the *Father* sends the Spirit to represent the **Son's** interests. The Spirit would 'teach them all things'. The Lord Jesus was necessarily restricted in His teaching of the disciples for they did not have the capacity to receive it (2.19-22; 12.16; 20.9), but the Spirit would help them understand the significance of the truth. The Spirit's ministry then, *was not to bring qualitatively new revelation, but to complete, to fill out, the revelation brought by Jesus himself ('all things')*. This teaching ministry is the basis for the NT epistles. The Spirit would also bring everything that the Saviour had personally taught them to their remembrance. This is the basis for the gospels (note also the basis for Revelation, 16.13). The recollection of the words of the Lord Jesus was not left to their memories. Everything that Christ spoke was precious; nothing shall be lost! Thus, the 'all things' were delivered in embryo form to the apostles through the words of the Lord Jesus, but fully developed and taught by the Spirit. There can therefore be no new revelation to be added to apostolic revelation. It is true, of course, that the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual truth to us (cf. 1 John 2.20; 27) and He helps us remember the word of God at the appropriate time, but only as the word of Christ dwells in us richly (Colossians 3.16).

v.27: The disciples were still fearful at the revelation of the Lord's going away. In v.1 He exhorted them not to be troubled but have *faith in God*; now they are not to be troubled but *enjoy His gift of peace*. The Lord was 'leaving' them peace as a *gift*, and 'giving' them peace as a *possession*. 'Peace' was a customary word of greeting and farewell amongst the Jews. It is a word which suggests *freedom from anxiety* as to circumstances and all that makes for *mental and spiritual welfare* (WE Vine). Peace secures *composure* in the midst of trouble and *tranquillity* in the midst of the storm. **Wiersbe** says: *Shalom means wholeness, completeness, health, security, even prosperity in the best sense. When you are enjoying God's peace, there is joy and contentment*. Thus, Christ's gift to us is 'my peace' (lit. 'the peace, the mine'), i.e. the peace that He enjoyed when He was here; the peace of unbroken communion with the Father; the peace of perfect confidence in the Father and rest in His will, despite the circumstances. This peace is fully available to every believer ministered to us by the Holy Spirit and word of God (v.26). **Ryle:** *Peace is Christ's peculiar gift: not money, not worldly ease, not temporal prosperity. These are at best very questionable possessions. They often do more harm than good to the soul. They act as clogs and weights to our spiritual life. Inward peace... is a far greater blessing. This peace is the property of all believers, whether high or low, rich or poor. The world generally gives grudgingly, sparingly and temporally. Christ gives sincerely, substantially and eternally*.

v.28: Although the Lord was going away the disciples should have been **rejoicing**. He was returning to the Father and would be received in great glory and honour (17.5). However, the thoughts of the disciples were focused on themselves and their loss, rather than Him and His gain. The thought of His joy should be our deepest joy! We may feel that to have the Lord physically rather than spiritually with us would be better, but He is nearer now than He ever could be before Calvary **and** He is **constantly** with us in a way that was impossible when He was physically on earth! 'The Father is greater than I' is a statement which must be kept in its context. The Lord Jesus is speaking here as the Servant; the sent One acting in submission to His Father's will. The Father is therefore greater, not as to His *Person*, but His *position* (Hebrews 2.9). **AW Pink:** *This is Christ owning His place as Servant and magnifying the one who had sent Him*.

vv.29-31: The Lord told them of His return to the Father before it happened to strengthen their faith (cf. Acts 2.33). They were to hold the glorified Christ in heaven as their continuing object of faith, even whilst they were still on earth (cp. 13.19). In order to further encourage their faith, the Lord mentions two matters in relation to His death. **Firstly**, death had *no claim* on Him (v.30) and **secondly**, His death was *voluntary* (v.31). **v.30:** From this moment onward, He would not speak much with them. The crisis had come and He had a work to do. The enemy was approaching. The 'Prince of this World' is a title of the Devil (cf. 12.31; 16.11). He is the one who exercises dominion or authority over the world. Since Calvary he has become the 'god of this impenitent age' (2 Corinthians 4.4). The devil had departed from the Lord for a season after the temptations (Luke 4.13), but now he returned personally for one final and violent assault. Yet, he 'had nothing' in the Lord Jesus. This is a Hebrew figure of speech meaning that the devil had no *legal claim* on Christ. There was no justifiable charge the devil could bring against this Servant! He is sinless. There is no weak or defective element in Him. Death was not, therefore, His due. **FB Hole:** *Satan had nothing in Christ because the Father had everything – all His love and obedience. He was meeting, not a man in innocence (Adam) but Man in absolute holiness and righteousness*. This would have been encouraging to fearful disciples. They should be in no doubt that in the ensuing conflict Christ must come forth as conqueror. **v.31:** Death was not His due, yet He would voluntarily lay down His life – for love of the Father. Is this not the perfect demonstration of the truth of v.23? He is the obedient Servant, obedient to the Father's commandment, and obedient even unto death. What a contrast to Adam and Eve who showed that they loved themselves and the world more than God. And so the world will *learn* the deep affection and love the Son has for His Father. How will the world come to know this? **Some** will learn the truth by believing the gospel, thus ceasing to belong to the world any longer; **all** will learn the truth in a coming day when Christ comes in great power and glory and *every knee shall bow* (Philippians 2.10).