



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

John Chapter 16

March 11, 2018

I. Lesson Starters:

God will Provide Through the Holy Spirit:

The 16th chapter is a full introduction to the “Counselor” role that was originally introduced in John 15:26. In Jesus’ “Farewell Discourse” from Chapter 15, the Counselor or Spirit of Truth was to function primarily as a defender not of the disciples but of Jesus and truth, thereby bolstering the work of those witnesses who spoke about what it was like to be with him.

This full revelation of the Holy Spirit was not needed from the beginning of Jesus’s relation with the disciples because at that time of his ministry, the Spirit was inseparable from Jesus physical presence with them. Let’s allow that to sink in for a moment. God incarnate, three in one was present with the disciples, which unbeknownst to them included the Holy Spirit. They simply would not have understood the Holy Spirit early on and only after Jesus departure would the full realization come upon them.

The Paradox of Discipleship:

In chapter 16, Jesus gave splendid reassurances to the disciples in order that they might have abounding joy, however this joy would not come in the absence of conflict, pain and even death in serving. Jesus tender comfort also came with stern warnings of inevitable persecution and pain. In this section will we look at the difficult paradox of being a Christian, immeasurable joy and comfort in the face of persecution, how can that be?

Faith in Conflict:

At this point before the Crucifixion, Jesus begins to talk very clearly with the disciples about his coming departure and their upcoming scattering to the wind. While Jesus earthly plan was nearing an end, the disciples did not understand their coming tribulation.

II. The Introduction of the Holy Spirit, Vs 1-15

¹ “All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. ² They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. ³ They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴ I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, ⁵ but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ¹² “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

It is fair to say that the disciples were totally lacking in an understanding of the Holy Spirit and Jesus reference to the Advocate/Counselor. They were so wrapped up in Jesus’s physical appearance, they failed to see his ultimate destination. This resulted in an “inadequate understanding of the person and his work,

and ultimately being ill prepared at his departure. They had no idea that His ascension would create advantages with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised to send a replacement in their lives for himself. In this new role, the Holy Spirit would serve as a prosecutor or judge whose role is defined by a single Greek word, ***elegcho***, which has several meanings:

- To clarify in a sense to bring light
- To convince in the sense of to bring to conviction
- To confute in the sense of to correct or confound

The general implication is that the Advocate would prove to the world wrong with respect to the treatment of Jesus, its own sin and treatment of the disciples.

Three specific tasks illustrate the range of the Advocates responsibilities: 1) Would show up the sin of the world for what it was in its rejection of Jesus, 2) Correct mistaken notion that righteousness could not be seen through Jesus on the cross and 3) Clarify that judgement was real and that the ruler of this world had been judged in advance of the end times.

The Counselor would have outward ministry (vs 8-11), it would also have an inward ministry to the church (Vs 12-15). The Holy Spirit would guide them in “all truth”. The Holy Spirit is the source of insight to understand and of courage to apply those truths which the church has received. We all have more truth than we are willing to accept or bear. Our need is for a “skillful” guide who can help take responsibility for the deeper implications of the gospel which we have not been able or willing to understand or to apply.

III. Paradox of Discipleship, Disciples Grief Will Turn to Joy, Vs 16-24

¹⁶ Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.” ¹⁷ At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father’?”¹⁸ They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.” ¹⁹ Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’?²⁰ Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹ A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²² So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. ²³ In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴ Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Throughout Chapters 13-16 Jesus gives numerous assurances to the disciples so that they may abundant joy. Unfortunately for us Christians, Jesus did not give any assurances about conflict or problems. In fact Jesus gave the disciples numerous stern warnings of inevitable persecution.

How do we as Believers come to grips with this apparently contradictory coexistence? The section creates the paradox of ***Sorrowful Joy***. The disciples had great difficulty grasping Jesus’s destiny in this single paradox. On one hand his earthly life and fleshly existence was about to end and he was defenseless. Before the disciples could realize it, his life was gone. Yet on the other hand, on the heels of what they perceived as an unmitigated tragedy, it would soon turn into the unqualified triumph of all of mankind!

Jesus then explained their upcoming difficulties with an analogy of a woman in childbirth. Just as a mother has sorrow and physical suffering, when “the time” has passed, she no longer remembers or focuses on the anguish, but only on the joy of the result.

IV. Faith in Conflict, Vs 25-33

²⁵ “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.” ²⁹ Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. ³⁰ Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.” ³¹ “Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. ³² “A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. ³³ “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Up to this point, Jesus had taught the disciples and instructed figuratively. In the new era after his death and resurrection, he would plainly tell them of the Father God. The change in the disciples understanding would be precipitated by the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit that would enlighten them. The understanding would allow them to understand what God had disclosed through the ministry of Jesus’s life on earth.

The disciples of course in their current limited understanding, thought that the time had come now for them to understand. As a result of Jesus death, the disciples could take courage in the midst of continuing conflict. Their poise would not be from themselves and their own understanding, as being from the gift of peace from God and the Holy Spirit. This section is the setup for Chapter 17, which is often described as “The loftiest spiritual passage in the gospel of John”.

V. 3 Group Discussion Questions:

1. Group 1 - *Introduction of the Holy Spirit*

- a. Read Vs 1-15
- b. Compile a list of the things that these scriptures specifically mention that the Holy Spirit will provide, bring or affect in the life of a Believer
- c. Write them down and share with the class

2. Group 2 – *Paradox of Discipleship*

- a. Read Vs 16-24
- b. In verses 20-22, discuss how this dually addresses the 1) Short time frame between Jesus death and resurrection and 2) A believer’s life of suffering verses out ultimate victory of eternal life?
- c. In verses 23, Discuss when it says that “To date they have asked nothing in His name?”
- d. In Vs 24, How does it make our “Joy be full”, when we ask and receive in His name?
- e. Write down your answers and share with the class

3. Group 3 - *Faith in Conflict*

- a. Read Vs 25-33
- b. In verses 25-26, discuss and explain the phrase “In that day, you will ask in my name. What does Vs 26 mean, who are we praying to, Jesus or God, explain?”
- c. In verses 27-33, how does a Believer “Take heart” knowing that such conflict and pain is promised in our Christian life?
- d. Write down your answers and share with the class