

Notes for week Two
Lean in and Listen. Jesus has a Message for You
John 14:1-27
A Message of Comfort

Life rarely goes as planned. What an understatement. For the disciples, their plans are unraveling quickly. It seems Jesus is leaving, that He won't be the earthly King they expected, that they won't be rulers with Him as they thought. They have just heard that one of them will betray Him and now Peter will deny Him (John 13:33-38). The disciples are not only confused, they are afraid.

If we live long enough, we will experience confusion, fear, and even doubt because life is not panning out as we imagined, or we are overwhelmed by the difficult situations of life. Jesus, however, speaks words of comfort to the disciples and to us. Lean and listen. He has a message for you.

When Jesus speaks 'comfort', it is important to understand the definition of the word. In English, it comes from 2 Latin words meaning "***with strength***". While there is an element of consolation within the word 'comfort', there is so much more. *To comfort* means "*to strengthen in order to bravely face what is ahead, to enable to keep going, to take up our responsibilities and move forward*". Don't confuse coddling with Biblical comfort. Jesus is not here to coddle the disciples or us. He is giving a message of comfort---Biblical comfort!

The first part of John 14 is a familiar passage. However, we seldom realize the distraught mindset of the disciples when Jesus delivers the message.

John 14:1, Jesus encourages them and us. *Let not your heart be troubled*. But how? The hope of comfort is wrapped up in the next phrase with the word "believe".

Believe means "*to entrust oneself unreservedly and to have complete confidence in*".

The verb tense of the phrase matters as well. "*Keep on believing in God. Keep on believing in Me*" When life is tough. When you are disappointed. When you are filled with confusion and doubt and fear---continue entrusting yourself with complete confidence to the Lord. This is faith. Not just believing facts, but trusting the truth enough to obey it.

Our comfort in difficult times is tied to what and who we put our faith in. Jesus is saying, "your comfort is tied to Me!" Comfort is found in our relationship with Christ. Jesus expounds for the entire chapter on what is available to us because we know Him personally. The five things He addresses give us comfort, but they are only ours because we know Jesus.

Chapter 14 is a conversation between Jesus and the disciples—a discourse—a dialogue. They are asking questions in their confusion and He is answering. While reading chapter 14, you can clearly see the recurring themes of relationship, prayer, and the Holy Spirit.

I. Heaven is anticipated

John 14:2-6 are familiar verses. They speak of Heaven. But look closely. This is not just pie in the sky in the sweet by and by.

Heaven is real. God the Father dwells there and there are many rooms, dwelling places. Song writers through the years have created a vision of mansions and splendor. While there may be some truth to that, the word “Dwelling place” means a common dwelling place. The splendor of Heaven is not where we live but that the Lord Jesus will be there. The word dwelling place has a deep connotation of “home.” To me, “home” is the most comforting word in the world. If it is not for you, one day it will be. Heaven will be “home” if you have a relationship with Jesus.

Jesus is leaving the Earth to go to heaven and prepare a dwelling place for those who love Him. He must go away. But His earthly leaving has a comforting purpose.

Jesus will return to get those who love Him. Jesus return in John 14 has many meanings.
His return when the church is taken out of this world.
His return when He sets up His earthly kingdom.
His return after His resurrection and before the ascension.
His return at Pentecost in the person of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:3 is His return when He takes the church out of this world. If we die, however, before the rapture of the church, we are indeed present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Jesus says, “You know the way to where I am going.”

Then practical Thomas says, “No we don’t. We don’t have a road map.”

With compassion, Jesus says indeed He Himself is the route and roadmap. Relationship with Him is required for entry into Heaven. The 11 remaining disciples had that relationship with Jesus, therefore, even if they did not fully understand it, Heaven would one day be their home.

Don’t miss this! Heaven is real but Heaven is also home. Not just anyone can claim it as home. Jesus is the key. We must know Him –not just know about Him, not just have religion, not just know the creeds and the catechism—we must personally know Jesus! He is our entry into Heaven. Do you know Him?

Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 1:9, and Revelation 21:4 are all passages about Heaven that encourage and comfort us when we are going through difficulties.

II. The Father is Accessible (John 14:7-11)

The word “Father” is used 53 times in John 13-17.

The word “know” is used 141 times in the Gospel of John.

John wants us to know the Father! But “knowing” has different levels.

- a. We can know a fact
- b. We can know a fact and the truth behind that fact.
- c. But the third level of knowing requires relationship. To believe in a person, entrust yourself to that person, and enter a relationship with that person. Genesis 4:1 speaks of this type of “knowing” when it refers to a husband and wife. We know Christ as we trust Him completely and also entrust ourselves unreservedly to Him.
- d. Paul speak of a fourth level of “knowing” It is the deepest of communion with the person to whom you have entrusted yourself. Philippians 3:8 “That I might know Him, in the power of His resurrection, in the fellowship of His suffering, being Conformed to His death.” Most often, suffering brings us into this kind of communion with Christ.

Jesus tells the disciples, who are strongly Jewish men, with a well-formed view of God, that if they will look at Jesus, they will see God. Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus. To a Jew, this was groundbreaking! God is accessible to individuals! God is with us! Jesus is God!

John 14:10 is important. Jesus is introducing the concept of “abiding.” The Father is abiding in Jesus. “Abide” means *to dwell or live* but in a deeper sense it means *to remain united in heart, mind, and will*.

The Father abides in Jesus, but the Father is not a silent resident. He speaks, Jesus hears Him, and does His will. Jesus is setting the example for what He will soon teach them/us—Jesus will abide in us.

John 14:11 was eye opening to me as I studied. “*Believe Me, that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.*” Sometimes life can cloud our perception of Jesus. Our view of Him gets fuzzy when we are sick, or depressed, or confused, or wounded. In those times, look back and see what He has done in the past. Review His faithfulness to you and His working in your past. Remember all He has done and let Him readjust your gaze to get a fresh perspective that indeed Jesus is God. He loves you and He is accessible to you!

III. Prayer is Available (John 14:12-15)

Jesus makes an interesting statement in verse 12. He says if He goes away, His followers will do even greater works than Him. How can that be?

Jesus is not talking about quality. He is talking about scope. The scope, the breadth, of His ministry will vastly increase if He goes away because He is giving two important gifts to believers. Prayer and The Holy Spirit.

Verse 13-14 are a wealth to unpack. We are skimming the surface this week. Three brief things to consider as Jesus discusses prayer.

- a. Vs 13. We ask. We have been given the privilege of prayer but we must exercise that privilege. So many times, when we need comfort, we run to friends, or we worry, or we self-medication when Jesus says to *pray*.
- b. Vs 13-14 We are to pray in Jesus' name. Praying in Jesus names sets perimeters around our praying.
 1. Praying in Jesus' name is relational. It is not a tag at the end of our prayer. It means to be in the family, able to represent the family, able to participate with the family. Not everyone can pray in Jesus' name—we must know Jesus and be in the family.
 2. Praying in Jesus' name is representative. When we pray in His name we are asking for those things represent the heart of Jesus, things that bring glory to God. Jennifer Kennedy Dean has a book, *Live a Praying Life*. In it she says, prayer is the means of asking for what God already wants to give. It is asking according to the will of God (1 John 5:14) God works through our prayers. He chooses to things that way. Our prayers must be in line with His will. But how?
 3. Verse 15 seems as if Jesus is changing the subject but He is not. In the context of prayer, loving Christ is demonstrated by obedience to Him. We cannot say we love Christ and then live any way we choose, throwing up a prayer now and then expecting God to come through. We are in a loving but obedient relationship with Jesus—just as He is with the Father. As we love and obey Him, He transforms our heart, our mind, our desires, our will, our motives, our intentions, our words, our actions. He also transforms our prayers! He changes what we want to match what He wants. Psalm 37:4 says when we are conformed to Christ (delighted in the Lord), we can ask whatever we want and He will give it—why? Because what we want looks just like what Jesus wants.

I love Philippians 4:6-7. Read it this week. Paul is admonishing Christians to pray instead of being anxious. We are to come to God:

In prayer—the connotation of worship, stilling our hearts before Him, knowing He is God and He is big enough to handle whatever we are about to bring Him.

Supplication—specific, energetic asking. Remember though, our asking is to reflect the heart of Jesus. Prayer is not self-seeking it is God seeking—God honoring- God glorifying.

With Thanksgiving—we pray with thankful hearts even BEFORE God gives an answer.

Thankfulness demonstrates surrender—an abandonment of our will to His.

Praying this way brings peace to the believer. God stands guard over our thoughts(mind) and our feelings(heart) like a soldier standing guard at his post. We experience the peace of God that exceeds our understanding. His peace also exceeds the world's understanding when they see you experiencing peace in turbulent times.

Prayer is gift, made available to believers, but we must exercise it.

IV. The Holy Spirit is Alive (John 14:16-26)

Jesus gives comforting news to his disciples. In fact, it is astonishing news! News they will not completely understand until later.

Jesus says another Helper is coming. In this passage, the Helper is identified by three names

1. **The Helper or paraklete.** John is the only writer to refer to the Holy Spirit as the paraklete. It means one who is summoned to the side of another, or an advocate like a lawyer who pleads the case of his client, or a tutor who instructs his students, or a doctor who comes to the bedside of a sick person to treat his illness, or a friend who pleads the cause of another, or one who comforts and encourages
2. **The Spirit of Truth-** one who reveals the truth, testifies to the truth, and defends the truth. Jesus is the Truth (John 14:6)
3. **The Holy Spirit- anything** described as *holy* is from God or has been set aside for special use by God. God Himself is Holy. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ who is God therefore the Spirit is holy.

The Holy Spirit is not a ghost. He is the third person of the Trinity, the same in nature as Jesus and God, different in function.

Verse 16-26 are revolutionary. Jesus is saying the Holy Spirit will not just be *with* you—He will be *IN* you! The Old Testament talks about the Holy Spirit of God coming UPON a person for a season or a special work. But Jesus is giving the disciples earth shattering news, news they will not completely understand until Pentecost-after Jesus ascension in to Heaven (Acts 2).

Verse 18 again has a theme of home. We are not being left as orphans to fend for ourselves. The Father is sending the Helper. This is good news. We are not saved and then left to figure things out on our own. Christ comes to abide in us through the Holy Spirit. We can be comforted—we are not alone!

Verse 21 again seems like Jesus is changing the subject. But He is not. He is still talking about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As believers, we cannot live any way we choose and experience the joy of His Spirit. Remember it is a loving relationship, demonstrated by obedience.

Paul tells in Ephesians 1:13, the Holy Spirit is a seal of our salvation. A seal indicated a finished and permanent transaction. When you came into the family of God –you got the Holy Spirit right then. Certainly, we learn to grow in knowledge of who He is. But the Holy Spirit is permanent. He does not come and go in us. We may quench the Spirit, or we may grieve the Spirit but we cannot expel the Spirit if we are true members of God's family.

John 14:21 also tells us the world cannot receive the Spirit. His indwelling is only for family members. Jesus also says to those who love Him, He will disclose Himself to them. *Disclose* means a *manifestation of sight*. In other words, believers will see Jesus. They see Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit in them.

The Holy Spirit is alive within the believer and there will be evidence of Him being there. The evidence of the Holy Spirit will be seen as we operate in the world, rub shoulders with difficult people, interact with people, handle difficult circumstances, or trust God when panic seems more plausible. The Holy Spirit is visible in us!

Thaddaeus (the other disciple also named Judas) does not understand what Jesus is saying. He thought Jesus would disclose Himself to the whole world by becoming King. Jesus reiterates, He is coming to live IN believers. The word *dwelling place* is used again in verse 24. *Not only is Jesus preparing a home for us in heaven, He is preparing us to be HIS home!*

Verse 26 is assurance to the disciples. The Holy Spirit will teach them all things. He will also remind them of all the things Jesus has taught and said. This is great word for us as well. As you study and read God's Word, the Holy Spirit is your teacher. He gives you understanding, drawing upon the Word you have deposited into your mind, reminding you of God's truth, teaching you how to apply truth to specific situations, training you in obedience. He is our tutor, our teacher, our encourager, our comforter—strengthening us to face whatever lies ahead with hope and confidence.

We cannot live one minute of the Christian life in victory apart from the Holy Spirit.

V. **Peace is abundant** (John 14: 27)

Jesus is actually continuing his discussion about the Holy Spirit when He says he is leaving them with peace.

The peace we have in Christ is unique. The world says we have peace in the absence of difficulties. Jesus says we have peace in the midst of those difficulties.

Peace is a gift. It is already ours because we know Jesus, but we have the ability to refuse to open the gift and use it. We can wring our hands, worried and anxious, or we can embrace the peace that is already ours through Christ.

Peace is also a fruit. Galatians 5:22 lists peace as part of the fruit of the Spirit. As the Holy Spirit works in us, He also works through us. The fruit is the visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit in our lives—His work in us and through us, resulting in peace.

Ladies, this message is not an academic study. It is a personal message to you. There is indeed comfort when life presses us. Heaven is real and it is home for believers. The Father loves you and He is right here—in Jesus. Prayer is available, so take your worries to Him. The Holy Spirit is alive and well—in you! Peace is yours for the receiving. Be comforted—strengthened to face whatever lies ahead.