



SERMON TITLE: God's Home in Us

DATE: October 4, 2020

SCRIPTURE: John 14:15-31

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"These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ" (John 20:31). This is how John concludes his biography of Jesus. He wanted the young, the old, the sick, the well, the despairing, the hopeful, the skeptics, the faithful, and whoever reads his account of Jesus to believe and trust him more fully. But what did John want them to believe? He wanted them to believe that Jesus alone brought eternal life into the present, broken world. And for all who enter this eternal life with God right now, we—like John—are exiles. For all who enter a relationship with Jesus, we will very likely be marginalized and dismissed because we follow him. So, what does it mean to believe? And how do we mature in believing? What does it mean to remain faithful to God when the pressure is on? These are the things that John will help us explore by showing us the glory and beauty of Jesus.

Saying "good-bye" to close friends who move away can be very hard. It's even harder to say "good-bye" to people we love when they die. This is the mood of the passage we are studying today. Jesus is meeting in an upstairs room with his disciples. They are eating and celebrating the Passover meal. This will be their last night together. Jesus has told them he is going away—going back to the Father. The disciples are disillusioned, confused, anxious, worried, and afraid. They are facing a painful good-bye. Jesus had raised their hope for a better life in the Kingdom of God come to earth, but now that hope seems lost, and they think they're going to be left alone. But Jesus is telling them that his going away will actually be better for them. He's saying, "Yes, I'm going back to the Father, but no, I'm not going to leave you as orphans. I will come back to you in the Person of the Holy Spirit." But again, they don't have a clue as to what that means, so he's teaching them and making them amazing promises all designed to comfort their troubled hearts. The question on their minds as they listened to Jesus talk that dark night was this: "How will it possible to experience the abundant life Jesus promised us if he leaves us—if he dies?" And that really isn't all that different from a question many of us wrestle with from time to time—"How can you have a close, personal relationship with someone who is not physically present?" Christians talk about "having a personal relationship with Christ." But how is that possible? What makes our relationship with God "personal" if we can't see, touch, and hear him? In John 14, Jesus answers that question for his disciples and for us.

READ 14:15-31 ~ In Jn14, Jesus tells his disciples, "I am leaving you...but...I will return to you" (vv18, 28). Everything he says in chp14 is focused on making this point—"I am going to die, but through my death, I will do something that will make it possible for all of you to experience the presence of God in a real and tangible way—in a very personal way. God will actually make his home in you" (v23). Now, when these men thought about God living with his people—the first thing that came to their minds was that God lived among his people in the temple. Or, even earlier in their history, God lived among his people in the tabernacle in the desert. Jn1:14 tells us that when Jesus came, he "tabernacled" among us, meaning that God had come to live among his people in the Person of Jesus. But, with Jesus leaving, how would that be possible? Here's the "big idea" of vv15-31 if Jesus were speaking plainly and succinctly—"Don't be worried or afraid. I am leaving you, but I am not going to leave you as orphans. I am going to prepare a place of closeness to God—a place where everyone who loves me and follows me can know God and enjoy life with God the way you have enjoyed life with me. And the way I will do that is by sending the Holy Spirit to live inside you. And when the Spirit makes his home in you, you will experience God's love in the same close and personal way that you have experienced God in me." Something like that. You see, b/c the nation had rejected Jesus (cf Jn1:10-11), the physical kingdom of God on earth would be postponed. But God would come and make his home inside all who believe in and love Jesus in the Person of the Holy Spirit. So, with that context and background, we need to more fully understand "who" the Holy Spirit is and "what" the Holy Spirit does for those who love and follow Jesus. Notice carefully that as Jesus tells us about the Holy Spirit, he also, at the same time, makes promises about how we can have a personal relationship with a God we can't see.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

First, the Holy Spirit is called our “helper” (vv16, 26). The Greek word is *paraclete*, “which means, “someone called alongside.” It’s a very general word. Called alongside for what? For anything and everything that you need. Could be an “intercessor.” Could be a “comforter.” Could be an encourager, a teacher, an advocate, or even somebody who would warn you when you go astray. Someone called alongside—someone with more wisdom, more truth, more power, more knowledge than you have. That’s the Helper—someone just like Jesus. The point is, the HS will come to fulfill the role Jesus had been fulfilling.

Second, the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of truth” (v17). God is true. Jesus is the truth. The HS is the Spirit of truth. He reveals to us the truth about God and life and faith in Jesus. He makes the God who is true and Jesus, who is the truth to be at home in you. Or said another way: “The God of truth revealed his truth perfectly in his Son. His Son sent the Spirit to reveal his truth to us, perfectly in the Scripture.

Third, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity (v23,26). B/c the Holy Spirit lives in you, you are incomplete, personal communion with the 3-in-1 Godhead. “We will come to you.”

What does the Holy Spirit do?

First, the Holy Spirit is our “teacher” (vv17,26, also 16:13). He teaches us. He brings God’s word to mind.

Second, the Holy Spirit is our “peace” (v27-28). He gives us a “relational peace” with God, not a “circumstantial peace” like the world is seeking.

Let me boil all this down to one sentence—*The Holy Spirit makes your relationship with God personal.*

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit came to fulfill the role Jesus had been fulfilling. Invite the Holy Spirit to be active in every part of your life. Ask the Spirit, who inspired the writing of Scripture, to illuminate your mind to understand Scripture. Ask the Helper to help you. Remember, you will receive the help of the Spirit if you love and obey Jesus more than anything else.

Discussion Starters — Have someone read 14:15-31 —

- Ask the group, “What would you say is the hardest “good-bye” you’ve ever experienced?”
- As a small group, imagine yourself sitting around the table with Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed. Imagine you don’t know what you know now—describe how you would be feeling about what you hear Jesus, saying about his leaving. Use more than one word! What argument would you make with Jesus about what you hear him saying. Maybe start with the words, “But Jesus...”
- Now imagine, (you’re still at the table with Jesus), how are you feeling about what he’s telling you about the Holy Spirit. How are you processing all this?
- How have you experienced the Holy Spirit as your “helper?”
- How have you experienced the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of truth?”
- How have you experienced the Holy Spirit as your “teacher?”
- How have you experienced the Holy Spirit as your “peace?”
- How can you practically actively pursue “life in the Spirit?” What do you need to ask the Holy Spirit to help you with this week?

