

John 14:15-31

Introduction

We remember from last week that Jesus' words in chapters 13-17 are all spoken in the light of His soon departure and "going away." And yet the emphasis isn't on "goodbye" or "farewell" but on Jesus' promise of a coming reunion and of His spiritual and powerful presence with His disciples until that reunion. Jesus' departure and "going away" is actually the key to both of these things.

When the disciples see Jesus in His resurrection power and glory, then they'll understand what it means that Jesus is in the Father and that the Father is in Jesus; then they'll understand that in seeing Jesus they're seeing the Father. And as a direct result of this "seeing," the disciples will do even "greater works" than Jesus did during the days of His flesh. Specifically, the disciples will ask Jesus for things they never could have dreamed of asking Him for before – or even of asking God. And Jesus promises that whatever they ask in His name, this He will do in and through them.

Even though Jesus has physically gone away, He's still spiritually and powerfully present with us. He hears our prayers and even calls us to share with Him in those "greater works" that He is doing and by which the Father is being glorified in Him. We enjoy fellowship with Him by asking Him to do in and through us those "greater works." But there's another closely related way by which we have fellowship with Jesus today. Jesus goes on to say in verse fifteen:

I. John 14:15 — "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

Do we ever read this verse in a cold and legalistic sort of way? If you love Me, you'll do everything I say and follow all my rules. That's technically true, but it's also so far from the spirit and intent of Jesus' words as not to be true at all. We must not divorce the commandments of Jesus from the person of Jesus. But don't we do this all the time? Jesus said in chapter thirteen:

➤ John 13:34-35 — "A new commandment **I give to you**, that you love one another, **even as I have loved you**, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are **My disciples**, if you have love for one another."

If we can't divorce the commandments of Jesus from the person of Jesus, then neither can we divorce the person of Jesus from His commandments. How is it that we enjoy fellowship with Jesus? It's very simple: By keeping the commandments that He Himself has given to us. Why is it true that if we love Jesus, we will keep His commandments? Because the path of Jesus' commandments is the path that Jesus walks in. The path of Jesus commandments is the pathway of fellowship with Him and of knowing His presence with us.

When we think of commandments we usually think of a list of ethical commandments (the Ten Commandments; love one another; flee from immorality; etc.). That's not wrong, but here in John there's another way to think of Jesus' commandments. Jesus said in chapter twelve:

- John 12:48–50 — “He who rejects Me and does not receive **My words**, has one who judges him; **the word** I spoke is what will judge him on the last day. For I did not speak from Myself, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a **commandment**—what to say and what to speak. And I know that **His commandment is eternal life**; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

The commandment (singular) that Jesus has given us is the command to believe in Him and so to have eternal life in Him. And now we need to see that the commandments (plural) that Jesus has given us are all rooted in this single Gospel commandment – they’re all rooted in His own saving and redeeming person.

- Matthew 11:28–30 — “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

If we love Jesus and would have fellowship with Him then we’ll keep His commandments because the way of His commandments is the way where He is—it’s even *who* He is. And so the way of His commandments is the way of fellowship with Him. But this fellowship with Jesus isn’t something we initiate. It’s Jesus who, because of His love for us, makes this fellowship possible. Jesus goes on to say in verses 16-17:

II. John 14:16–17 — “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, that He may be with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”

What is an advocate? The Greek word is *parakletos* (paraclete). The ESV and NASB translate this word as “Helper” while some of the older versions translate as “Comforter.” An advocate can certainly be said to help and comfort, but an advocate does more than this. An advocate is someone who *advocates for* a cause or an idea or a thing or a person – in this case *for us*. This Advocate, therefore, is someone who supports and fights for us in every way that could ever be necessary or needed. While Jesus has been with the disciples He has been their Advocate. We see this in chapter seventeen:

- John 17:12 (cf. 13:33) — “While I was with them, **I was keeping them** in Your name which You have given Me; and **I guarded them** and not one of them perished but the son of perdition...”

But now Jesus is going away and so He promises to send His disciples *another* Advocate who will be *with them forever*. Isn’t this a wonderful thing to know? But is this “other” Advocate just a replacement for Jesus? Once the “new” Advocate has come and is with us is Jesus, who has gone away, no longer “relevant”? Notice how Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of truth.” And remember how in verse six, Jesus said, “I am... the truth.” The work of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth—in advocating for us is wholly bound up with the person of our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ – **who is the truth**. The Holy Spirit, when He comes to be with us forever, will advocate for us by bearing witness to Jesus – to the truth that He is and the truth that He has spoken—including all His commands. It’s in this way that the Spirit of truth will support

us and help us, and instruct us and teach us, and remind us and convict us, and strengthen us and comfort us, and otherwise advocate for us in every way that we could ever need: by always bearing witness in our hearts to the risen Lord – to Jesus who is the truth.

On the one hand, this “other” Advocate is personally distinct from Jesus and the Father: “**I** will ask the **Father**, and **He** will give you **another** Advocate, that **He** may be **with you** forever; the *Spirit of truth*.” On the other hand, notice the emphasis on “seeing” Him and “knowing” Him: “the world... does not **see Him** or **know Him**. You **know Him** because He abides with you and will be in you.” Doesn’t this remind us of verses 7 and 9?

➤ John 14:7, 9 — “If you have come to **know Me**, you will **know My Father** also; from now on you **know Him**, and have **seen Him**... He who has **seen Me** has **seen the Father**.”

When Jesus speaks of “seeing” and “knowing” the Spirit of truth in the same way that He speaks of “seeing” and “knowing” the Father and the Son, He must be speaking of one who is co-equal with the Father and the Son and therefore of the same undivided essence and being as the Father and the Son. That’s not just “fancy theology.” This is what makes the Spirit’s advocacy for us so unfailingly effective. If to see and to know Jesus is to see and know the Father, then what does it mean to see and to know the Spirit of truth *who abides with us and is in us* forever? We see that it must be through this “abiding” and “indwelling” of the Spirit of truth that we come to enjoy communion and fellowship with *the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*. We see this in the fact that it’s the **Son** who *asks* the **Father** to *give* the **Spirit**. It’s the abiding and indwelling **Spirit of truth** who communicates to us the presence of our **risen Lord** and enables us to see Him and know Him (and in seeing and knowing Him to see and know **the Father**) and to enjoy fellowship with Him by walking in the way of His commandments.

If we don’t already have some experiential knowledge of these things there’s no way for us to really understand what Jesus is talking about. This will be a foreign language to us. But to the extent that we have already experienced these things, then we’ll be enabled all the more to enjoy true fellowship with the Triune God in and through the Holy Spirit who abides with us and is in us forever. We’ll be enabled all the more to love Jesus and experience His presence with us by walking in the way of His commandments. Jesus continues in verses 18-20:

III. John 14:18–20 — “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

When and how will Jesus “come” to the disciples? He’s speaking here of His resurrection appearances before He ascends into heaven. “I [Myself],” He says, “will come to you... Because *I live*, you will live also. The importance of Jesus’ coming to His disciples is that it will be the proof of His resurrection; it will be the proof that He lives not only then (when He comes to them) but also forevermore at the right hand of God. In other words, the point is not, “I will come to you and stay with you forever,” but rather, “I will come to you and you will know then that I am alive forevermore – you will know then that I am not dead and that you are not left as orphans. Can you see that there’s a sense in which these words apply only to those original

disciples and to a select few others in the first century (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-8)? We'll read in John twenty:

- John 20:19, 26 — “While it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and while the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus **came** and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ... After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus **came**, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”

Jesus came to those original disciples, but He didn't come to us. Everything Jesus says in these chapters has some application to us, but we need to remember that Jesus is speaking specifically to that original group of His disciples and that there are some things He says to them that He couldn't say to us.

When we understand that Jesus wasn't saying He would come to *us* does this mean that we *have* been left as orphans? Not at all! It's because Jesus came to those original disciples after His resurrection that we can know today that He has not left us as orphans – because He lives, we will live also.” It's because Jesus came to those original disciples after His resurrection that we can know today that He is in His Father, *and we in Him, and He in us*.

Notice the emphasis here on the fellowship that we have with Him even after He's gone away. And notice the way Jesus describes this fellowship. In verse ten, Jesus said, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me.” Now Jesus says that we are in Him and He is in us. We know this is true because we know that He lives and *because He lives we live also*. We know this is true because He lives and *because He lives the Spirit of truth is with us forever; He abides with us and is in us*. We know this is true because, believing these things, we've experienced—and are invited to experience always more and more—this fellowship and communion with Him. So now Jesus continues in verse 21:

IV. John 14:21 — “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

Notice how Jesus changes from the second person (“you”) to the third person (“he”). Now Jesus is casting a wider circle; now He's specifically including all of us. The one who has Jesus' commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Jesus because the way of His commandments is the way where Jesus is—it's the way of fellowship with Him. That's why Jesus goes on to say, “and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” I think of the words to the hymn, “Trust and Obey”: “When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way! While we do His good will, He abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey... But we never can prove the delights of His love until all on the altar we lay; for the favor He shows and the joy He bestows are for them who will trust and obey.”

Jesus loves us by disclosing Himself to us. And how does Jesus disclose Himself to us? By asking the Father to give us another Advocate, even the Spirit of truth, who abides with us and is

in us. But the Father isn't a reluctant or neutral "party" in these things. **The Father, too, loves us**, Jesus says, by giving to us the Spirit of truth for the sake of His Son. And we know that **the Spirit loves us, too**, because He always advocates for us. Truly, Jesus has not left us as orphans!

V. John 14:22 — Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"

Judas is thinking of the Messiah's self-disclosure in power and glory when He comes on the last day to judge the world. "What then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"

VI. John 14:23-24 — Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."

Jesus isn't denying that one day He'll show Himself to the world. But the self-disclosure He's talking about here is the kind that's only possible for those who love Him and keep His word. The self-disclosure He's talking about here is His and the Father's coming to us who love Him and making their "dwelling" with us. The only other place in the New Testament that this word for "dwelling" is used is in verse two, where Jesus said:

➤ John 14:2-3 — "In My Father's house are many **dwelling**s; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, you may be also."

And so we see that the fellowship that we look forward to in our future *dwelling* with Him may already be enjoyed today because the Father and the Son have come and made their *dwelling* with us.

To keep Jesus' word—to obey His commandments—is not only to walk in the path of fellowship with Jesus but also to walk in the path of fellowship with the Father because the word that Jesus has spoken is not His, but the Father's who sent Him.

How does the risen and living Jesus disclose Himself to us? How do Jesus and His Father come to us and make their dwelling with us? How is it that we can have Jesus' words and keep them? The answer to all these questions is that Jesus has asked the Father, and the Father has given us another Advocate, the Spirit of truth, who abides with us and is in us forever.

Now Jesus switches again from the third person ("he") to the second person ("you"):

VII. John 14:25–26 — “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you [this can only apply to those original disciples]. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

The Holy Spirit can't bring back to our remembrance the things that Jesus said to us when He was abiding with us because He never was abiding with us and He never did say anything to us. So what's the importance of knowing that Jesus made this promise to those original disciples (cf. 15:26; 16:14-15)? We see the answer in the very fact that today we can read and preach through John's Gospel. After all the uncomprehending questions of the disciples (4:31-34; 12:20-23; 13:6-10, 36-38; 14:5, 8-9, 22; 16:17-18, 29-32; 20:8-10, 22), how is it possible that one of these same disciples could be the author of this Gospel? Only because the Holy Spirit came and taught the disciples all things, bringing to their remembrance all the things that Jesus had said to them when He was with them and giving them understanding (cf. 2:22; 12:16; 14:20).

The Holy Spirit performed this unique work for those original disciples not just for their sake, but for the sake of all of us so that we, too, might know the things Jesus said – so that we, too, might have Jesus' commandments and keep them and so walk in the path of fellowship with Him. The Advocate who brought to the original disciples' remembrance all that Jesus had said to them is the same Advocate—the Spirit of truth—who abides with us and is in us. He enables us to understand the things we read and to walk in obedience to Jesus' word (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3; Rom. 8:9) so that we might have living fellowship with the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And so now Jesus says in verses 27-28—and now we can understand:

VIII. John 14:27–28 — “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you [I will live again after death].’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.”

The disciples don't yet love Jesus as they should because they're clinging to Jesus only as they know Him in the flesh. Remember how Mary clung to Jesus even after He was raised from the dead, not being willing that she should ever be parted from Him again (20:17). The disciples don't desire—yet—the truer fellowship that they'll have with Jesus after He's gone to the Father and been glorified in Him (cf. 13:31-32). They haven't yet desired the fellowship they'll enjoy on that day when Jesus has asked the Father to give them another Advocate to abide with them and be in them forever (14:16-17). They haven't yet desired the far more wonderful fellowship that they'll have with Jesus after He has gone to the Father and they have come to know that they are in Him and He is in them (14:19-20). But they will soon. And then instead of grieving they'll rejoice that Jesus has gone to the Father. Because in going to the Father Jesus has opened the way for the Triune God Himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) to come and make His dwelling with us.

Do we rejoice that Jesus has gone to the Father? Are we walking in the way where Jesus is – in the way of His commandments? Are we enjoying sweet fellowship with the Triune God? Jesus concludes:

IX. John 14:29–31 — “And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe [so that when it happens you may *love Me* truly and *rejoice*]. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming [suffering and death], and he has nothing in Me; 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.”

Jesus goes now to meet the ruler of this world in battle and—because the ruler of this world has nothing in Him (8:23, 46)—to triumph over him in the cross. Why does He do this? He does this because He loves the Father and does exactly as the Father has commanded Him. He does this because this is the Father’s plan to bring us all into fellowship with the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—forever and ever and ever.