

John 15:12-16

Good morning and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to John 15? We will be partaking in communion together, so please raise your hand if you need the elements.

Last week we saw the blueprint for successful Christian living-to abide in the vine, the true vine, Jesus Christ. And we saw how God's desire for us is to bear fruit, that He would be glorified.

We left off in verse 11 last week, and this morning we'll pick up in verse 12 and study through all of chapter 16.

This is the end of Jesus' farewell speech. And in this final exhortation, we see Jesus talk about the work of the HS, being a disciple of Christ, bearing fruit, loving one another, persecution, and joy.

The title of this morning's message is LASTING INSTRUCTIONS

Let's read verses 12-13 and then we'll pray

12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends

Lets pray

They are making their way now from the upper room after the last supper to the garden of gethsemane. Little do the apostles know of the traumatic events that are about to unfold in just mere hours. And knowing that He is going away, Jesus gives His final teaching to them.

12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Jesus taught that we are to love others just as He loves us. Not only love them when they meet our requirements or

satisfy our expectations, we are to simply love them as Jesus loves them.

And these words are especially powerful when we consider that just a short time before this, the disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest, and they had been unwilling to wash each other's feet.

13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Most, if not all of you are familiar with the story of the titanic. The true travesty of that disaster in April 1912 wasn't the repeated disregard for the potential hitting an iceberg. No the real travesty was the fact that some of the lifeboats were half empty.

As the half-filled boats rowed away from the ship, they were too far for other passengers who were flailing in the water to reach, and most lifeboats didn't return to the wreck. In fact, only two of the many half empty lifeboats returned to retrieve survivors from the water.

You understand what this means. Most of the passengers safe inside the lifeboats didn't want to turn around and go pick up dying people. They didn't want to take the risk of dealing with hurt people, dealing with panicked people, and they didn't want the hassle of dealing with people in need.

So the people who were rescued, the people who were safe on the lifeboats kept on going-they didn't go back to help. 1,500 people didn't have to die that day, but they did.

Why mention the titanic with these words of Jesus? Because you, and I, and every other Christian is in a similar position as those who piloted those lifeboats 109 years ago.

Yes sharing the gospel today has risks. Risk of rejection, the risk of ridicule, the risk of alienation, risk of being avoided, the risk of

being asked questions that we don't know the answer too. Even now adays some face the real risk of losing their jobs and their livelihood as a result of sharing the gospel.

There are risks. But when someone is dying, offering them the gift of salvation is worth the risk isn't it?

I'm so glad someone took the risk with me!

It's unlikely any of us will experience physical death in place of a friend. That doesn't happen much in this part of the world.

Yet what is far more likely, and perhaps even more challenging is the daily dying to ourselves to share the gift of eternal life to those who are dying.

Jesus had spoken of His love for His disciples in verse 12. Now He talks about laying ones life down for His friends. And the next day Jesus would show them the greatness of His love by making the supreme sacrifice for them.

Not only do we have Jesus' commands to obey, but also His example to follow. Let's make sure we're doing that.

14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. If you want some homework, go through and count all the times in the upper room discourse, John 13-17, count how many times Jesus says to follow His actions and His word.

A lot of folks declare themselves Christians today. The litmus test of true Christianity, according to Jesus, is if we are doing what He has told us to do.

15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. A servant is someone who receives orders without any explanation

as to why that order was given. The servant is simply told to do this, or to do that.

Yet a friend is vastly different. A friend is included on what the plans are. And Jesus' point is that disciples aren't just servants, He has called them full partners with Him in His work.

16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. Jesus is echoing His words that he gave back in the first part of John 15, that we studied last week, how bearing fruit is evidence of our faith.

17 These things I command you, that you love one another. Remember, Jesus had chosen Matthew the tax collector. He was a Jew who worked for Rome, he would be viewed as the most hideous of traitors!

And Jesus also had Simon the zealot as an apostle. These were the guys who were actively trying to overthrow the roman government.

Talk about polar opposites in 2 people! The traitor and the terrorist!

Today it's not uncommon to see Christianity become divided over political views and party lines. Yet I'd challenge you to name 2 people more opposed than Simon the zealot and Matthew the tax collector.

It's interesting, when you study the gospels Jesus only brought up politics 2 times. **Luke 13:31 On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."**

32 And He said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’”

And

Luke 20:25 And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

Apparently, Jesus was more concerned with folks following Him than He was their political persuasions. We need to make sure we have the same priorities!

18 “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

I don't watch the news very often, but when I do, I usually find myself shaking my head in astonishment at the level of animosity and disregard towards Jesus. And yet the Bible tells us this will happen:

1 John 4:5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.

I was astounded on Friday to learn the US Air Force had a drag show on their base, saying it was “essential for the readiness of the military.” I'm shaking my head! But they are of the world!

And notice the contrast in the verses we just studied this morning!

In verse 17, disciples are to be known by their love, and in verse 18 the world is known by its hatred for Christ followers. And folks it will always be that way until the return of Christ.

19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Here, when Jesus uses the word “world” He's obviously not talking about the physical planet earth.

Rather He's describing the ungodly, rebellious spirit of the age that shows up in our culture.

The world doesn't hate Christians because we're somehow superior-because we're not!

No the world hates Christians because we are servants of the Lord whom the world has rejected.

20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. If you choose to follow Jesus expect the world to treat you just like it treated Jesus.

I really encourage you to read 1 Peter which gives us instructions on how to handle persecution.

21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. The Jews rejected Jesus because they didn't truly know God. So they rejected God's Son.

And the same is true today. Because people don't know God, nor His son, they will also reject us as Christians because He has sent us.

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He who hates Me hates My Father also. By coming into the world, and declaring the truth, Jesus had confronted people with their rebellion against God.

And Jesus couldn't be any clearer here. Whenever the world rejects of Jesus, they are rejecting God the Father.

Don't be fooled by smooth lips that professes a love for God and a disbelief in Jesus. The bible is very clear-if you reject Jesus, you reject God.

24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. 25 But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' The Jews' own Scriptures-the OT, condemned their unbelief. In Psalm 69 David experienced hatred for no reason.

And if David experienced it, how much more would the Son of David experience it?

Now all of this talk about persecution must've shaken up an already stunned group of disciples. And in verse 26 Jesus once again reminds they will not be left on their own.

26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. Now we saw in John 14 how Jesus previously spoke of the sending of the Helper, the HS. Jesus knew the disciples would need the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit to face the opposition the world would bring.

Now the Bible is clear-everything the Holy Spirit does is consistent with the testimony of the nature of Jesus. His job is to tell us, and to show us, who Jesus is.

If spiritual things happen that are not consistent with the nature of Jesus, it isn't the Holy Spirit doing it.

This is why we don't condone what some call 'being slain in the spirit', where folks fall uncontrollably to the ground. Or 'holy

laughter', where folks say the HS has a hold of them and they are given to uncontrollable laughing fits.

The problem is those actions are not compatible with the nature of Jesus. Jesus was ALWAYS in control and under control.

SHOW PIC 1 Many years ago, the king of late night talk shows was Johnny Carson. It wasn't until I was a young man that I learned that Ed McMahan's career didn't begin on Star-Search!

CLOSE PIC 1

Yet a key to Johnny Carson's success was a man you never heard of - the long-time producer whose name was Freddy DeCordova. **SHOW PIC 2** One night during filming the camera panned off stage and focused on Freddy DeCordova. It was both unusual and unplanned.

When Freddy realized he was on camera he was furious. He started shouting, "No, no, no! Get the camera on Johnny. He's the star." **CLOSE PIC 2**

The Holy Spirit operates in a similar way. The Spirit's job is never to attract attention to Himself. He focuses the spotlight on Jesus. The HS testifies of Jesus!

Some charismatic Christians get so wrapped up in the things of the Spirit they forget about Jesus, and they neglect His Lordship.

Yet a Christian that's truly Spirit-led will be all about Jesus- The Holy Spirit will see to it.

27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. Empowered by the Spirit and His testimony about Jesus, the disciples will bear witness of who Jesus is and what He did to rescue the world.

Chapter 16-Jesus' final exhortations.

1-4

1 “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. 2 They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. 3 And these things they will do to you^[fn] because they have not known the Father nor Me. 4 But these things I have told you, that when the^[fn] time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

“And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. The road ahead will not be easy for disciples. The shadow of persecution is looming in the distance.

Their consolation is the Holy Spirit who will empower them to fulfill Christ’s commands.

Too often we talk to new Christians about the love, joy, and blessing they’ll find in Christ, but we say nothing of the persecution that’s promised.

We shouldn’t scare folks needlessly, but Jesus kept His disciples from stumbling because He was very clear about what lay ahead.

He explained to them their fellow Jews will consider killing a Christian a favor to God. If you remember this was exactly the attitude Saul had before His encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

5 “But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. You may remember Peter had asked this question in John 13 and Thomas asked a similar question in John 14. Why did Jesus say “none of you asks Me where are you going?”

The prior questions were based more on the fact that Jesus was leaving them, rather than the place He would go-to the right hand of the Father. And Jesus is telling them-now is the time to be asking the questions, but they remained silent.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. Jesus' departure meant the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Even though it was hard for the disciples to grasp at the time, Jesus knew this would be to their advantage.

The man, Christ Jesus was limited to one place at a time. But the Holy Spirit would be with all believers, in all places, at all times.

8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; It is unbelief, the rejection of Jesus, which ultimately proves a person to be guilty. In spite of their unbelief, the Spirit graciously convicts unbelievers of their sinfulness—so that they will believe on Jesus.

10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; The ascension of Jesus to heaven demonstrated that He had perfectly fulfilled the Father's will and had proven Himself righteous – and exposed the lack of righteousness in the world that rejected Him. The Holy Spirit shows the world its own unrighteousness in the light of the righteousness of Jesus.

11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. The judgment of Satan himself means that there will be a final reckoning between God and Satan. The Holy Spirit warns the world of this coming judgment.

12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. Jesus knew the disciples were in overload. He wanted to tell them more, but at the moment they lacked the ability to digest any more.

13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine.

Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.^[fn] The Holy Spirit’s ministry is revealing Jesus to us, bearing witness of the testimony of Jesus. The Spirit uses many different ways and many different gifts to accomplish this, but the purpose is always the same: to reveal Jesus.

16 “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.” Jesus is clearly speaking about His upcoming death, resurrection, and ascension.

17 Then some of His disciples said among themselves, “What is this that He says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” 18 They said therefore, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is saying.” They’re talking about Jesus while He is right there!

And doesn’t this happen to us sometimes? We go to other people asking the questions-‘what’s going on, why’s this happening,’ instead of going directly to the Lord.

19 Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’? 20 Most assuredly, I say to you that you will

weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. Again we see that Jesus is obviously speaking of His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, which we'll be studying for the next couple of months.

Jesus now gives an illustration of what He just described.

21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. It really is amazing; I don't think there's any other experience in life where the pendulum swings quite so far so fast as that of childbirth. One moment a delivering mom is screaming, in agony. Then a few moments after the baby arrives the very same woman is in sheer elation.

This was the same sort of swing the disciples experienced when they discovered Jesus' resurrection.

Here the disciples didn't fully understand the separation that was to come, so they could not fully comprehend the joy of the coming reunion.

23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing." In other words, all your questions will be answered.

Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. I'm sure they had prayed to the Father, but never in the name of the Son. And just as we studied last week, Jesus again emphasizes the necessity to pray in His name.

This is why it's so foolish that anyone attempts to pray through the saints or through Mary. Could anyone have more clout than God's sinless Son?

25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. 26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. When Jesus intercedes for us it's not as if He's overcoming a reluctance on the Father's part to bless us. Look what Jesus says in verse 27 "the Father Himself loves you." Jesus gives us access to God, He doesn't change the Father's heart toward us. He's always loved us.

Verse 28 is an incredible summary of the work of Jesus.

28 I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

Jesus is God, having existed in heaven's glory before He ever came to the earth. Jesus was born as a man, having added humanity to deity. Jesus then died, and rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven

29 His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! 30 Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God." The disciples are like AHHHH-now we got it!!

31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. At that moment the disciples

sounded so confident, but soon they'll abandon Him. They'll be scattered and their confidence shattered.

Verse 33 is the triumphant conclusion to Jesus' farewell discourse to His disciples and the last of Jesus' teaching before the cross.

33 These things I have spoken to you, All these things we've been studying...

that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Now, Jesus isn't saying here that the church is going through the Great Tribulation. And there's a big difference between the tribulation that we experience as a child of God and the Tribulation that the world is going to experience as a rebel against God that we see in the book of Revelation.

Jesus says **in the world you will have tribulation**. Why? Because we're not of the world. And where does this tribulation originate against the child of God? From Satan.

But where does the Great Tribulation originate from? Its origin is from God, as God comes to judge the world for the rejecting of His Son.

So there's a massive difference between the tribulation that the church faces in the world and the Great Tribulation that the world will face when God has removed His righteous remnant out of the world, and then begins to judge it for its rejection of His Son.

But notice the end of the verse **but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

Victory was bought and paid for by Jesus!

The Christian race is the only race in the world that begins at the finish line. We don't fight for victory, we fight from victory. The

battles already won. Jesus has already overcome. No wonder He says be of good cheer!

This is what we remember with communion.

Luke 22:19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

AND

20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."