

Bible Fellowship Teaching Plan for John 14:15-31 (July 26, 2026)

Loving Christ Through Obedience to be Empowered
by the Holy Spirit and Sustained by His Peace

Central Truth: Authentic love for Jesus is demonstrated through obedience and empowered by the Holy Spirit, resulting in the abiding presence and peace of God.

John's purpose (20:31): "These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Key passage (15): "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

Opening Question: Think about someone you deeply love. How does your love naturally influence the way you respond to that person's wishes or desires? How is loving Jesus different from merely trying to obey religious rules?

Lesson Objective: to be able to 1) explain why obedience is the evidence of genuine love for Christ; 2) describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit as Helper, Teacher, Advocate, and Comforter; and 3) understand, embrace, and live in the peace the Lord gives.

Background: Jesus has just given the illustration of the vital unity that results from the disciples' love for Him, His love for the disciples, His love for the Father, and the Father's love for Him in the picture of the vine and the branches. He now applies that illustration to our vital unity with Christ that's revealed in our love, our obedience, and our joy

I. Love Reveals Itself Through Obedience (14:15, 21, 23-24)

- A. Notice the progression: believe, love, obey
- B. He's not saying. "Obey Me so I will love you," but "Because you love Me, you will obey Me." Love is the root; obedience is the fruit.

Questions for reflection:

1. Why do people often reverse this order?
2. What kinds of obedience flow naturally from love?

II. Loving Obedience Opens the Door to God's Presence (14:16-24)

A. The Promise of the Holy Spirit

1. Comforter
2. Counselor
3. Advocate
4. Teacher
5. Guide
6. Strengthenener

B. The Holy Spirit will

1. Dwell with believers
2. Dwell in believers
3. Teach truth
4. Remind believers of Christ's words
5. Empower Christian living

C. The Promise of God's Presence. Jesus promises, "We will come to him and make Our home with him."

D. The Promise of Spiritual Understanding. The Holy Spirit would

1. Remind the disciples
2. Teach them
3. Illuminate Jesus' words
4. Guide them into truth

Questions for Reflection:

1. How did the disciples' fears disappear after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost?
2. How does knowing that God lives within you affect your everyday life?

III. Christ Gives a Peace the World Cannot Give (14:25-31)

- A. The Lord Jesus Christ gives us His peace
- B. Christ's peace is different because it's not based on circumstances, finances, health, politics, success, or comfort and rests upon Christ's finished work on the cross, His abiding presence, and our reconciliation with God
- C. People seek peace in all sorts of things that can never bring the peace the soul longs for.
- D. The world offers temporary relief; Jesus offers lasting peace.

Questions for reflection:

1. How have you experienced Christ's peace?
2. How do you daily experience His peace?
3. What interferes with your experience of His peace that you need to set aside today?

IV. Jesus Calls His Followers to Trust Rather Than Fear (14:28-31)

- A. Jesus reminds them:
 1. He is returning to the Father.
 2. The Father will send the Spirit.
 3. Satan will be defeated
- B. The disciples' love for Jesus and His love for the Father make all this possible.

Questions for Reflection

1. How does my daily obedience reveal the depth of my love for Christ?
2. Are there areas in my life where I resist His commands?

3. What motivates my obedience most: duty, fear, guilt, or authentic love for Christ?
4. How have I experienced the Holy Spirit helping, teaching, or comforting me?
5. Am I depending on my own strength more than the Spirit's power?
6. Where am I currently looking for peace apart from Christ?
7. How does Jesus' promise, "I will not leave you as orphans," encourage me today?
8. What step of loving obedience is Jesus asking me to take this week?

Practical Applications

1. Examine the Motive Behind Your Obedience. Instead of asking, "What do I have to do?" ask, "How can I best express my love for Christ today?"
2. Depend Daily on the Holy Spirit. Begin each morning by consciously asking the Spirit to guide your decisions, teach you His Word, strengthen your witness, and develop a more Christlike character
3. Practice the peace that only Jesus gives. Remember and rest in God's promises, pray before reacting, recall Christ's presence, and trust God's sovereign hand at work in your life.

Closing Challenge: Jesus doesn't leave His followers with a list of rules to keep. He calls us to love Him, and obedience to His command will flow naturally from our love for Him. The One who commands us to love Him gives us His Spirit to empower our obedience, the Father's presence to sustain us, and His own peace to steady our hearts. As you leave this lesson, focus on asking yourself the question, "How can I show my love for Christ today?" and trust the Holy Spirit to enable you to do exactly what Jesus has called you to do.

Sunday School Lesson for July 26, 2026
John 14:15-31

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, in our current study, we've been discovering how John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, documents the life and ministry of the Lord "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

On this last Sunday in July, as we see that purpose played out in every word on every page of this precious book, John has invited us to join him in the Upper Room where the Lord is sharing His last Passover meal with His disciples. In chapter thirteen, we've seen the Lord wash the disciples' feet and explain how they were to serve each other; we've heard the Lord identify to John the one who would betray Him, and Judas has left the room to arrange for Jesus' arrest; the Lord has explained how He and the Father would soon be glorified in His death; and He's given them a new commandment to love one another just as He has loved them so that the world would know that they are His disciples.

Now, in chapter fourteen, the conversation continues as the Lord assures them of His provision for them as the Way, the Truth, and the Life--Trey will speak on the first fourteen verses of chapter fourteen, then we'll hear the Lord tell them in verses fifteen through 31 of His peace and abiding presence through the One He would send in His place--the Helper, the Comforter--Who would teach them everything they needed to know and remind them of everything He's told them.

When the Lord told His disciples gathered there in the Upper Room that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life, His disciples were still confused about where He was going and why they couldn't come with Him. Although John is probably giving us the Cliffs Notes version of what was certainly a

much more detailed conversation, our Lord's answer should have been enough to take the disciples back to those powerful moments when the signs Jesus gave--from turning water to wine to the raising of Lazarus--should have been enough to assure them that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him. The wonder-working power of His miracles, the authority of His words and His testimony, and the evidence of the new spiritual life and power that would characterize the disciples' lives should be all the evidence they would need to comfort and sustain--even empower and embolden them in the days ahead, including the "greater works" that He speaks of in verse twelve.

To explain more fully how the disciples would be able to do greater works in His name, He first sets the condition that they love Him, and that the evidence of their love for Him would be found in their obedience to His commandments, beginning with the new commandment He has just given them to love one another--verse fourteen: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

Just as the key word of the last part of His conversation was "believe," the key word of what follows is "love." Believing will inspire love and love will prompt them to an obedience that results in their peace. Let me repeat that: Believing will inspire love and love will prompt them to an obedience that results in their peace. As they keep His commandments, thus verifying their love for Him, He will send the Holy Spirit, and the peace the Spirit gives will provide them with the confidence and security they so desperately need for this moment and the days ahead.

So, following His prerequisite, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments," allows them access to everything He says in verses 16 through the remainder of His conversation with them in the Upper Room. This basic requirement is the key to living an authentic Christian life. It's the means to access all that the Lord offers, the power to do whatever He calls us to do, and the confidence that John speaks of in his first letter, chapter three, beginning in verse 21 when he writes, "Dear friends, if our hearts do not

condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.”

So, Jesus is saying, “If ye love Me, you won’t show your love most by your concern about My departure and your grief over My absence. If you really love Me, you’ll demonstrate your love most of all by following my instructions--living the life that I’ve been calling you to and modeling for you for the last three years. The clearest evidence that you truly love Me will be your obedience to what I’ve commanded.” Simply claiming to be His disciple is no proof of true love, but the love for Him that reveals itself by doing His will, loving each other, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Him wherever He leads, surely reveals that we love Him. By truly loving Him, we have the ability, the insight, the power, and the desire to do whatever it is He calls us to do.

The principle that underlies His words is that love is the foundation of obedience, and obedience is the certain outcome and the result of love. Alexander MacLaren says, “That is exactly what distinguishes and lifts the morality of the Gospel above all other systems. ... It is not for [a lack] of knowledge that men go to the devil, but it is for [lack] of power or will to live [in accordance with] their knowledge. And what morality fails to do, with its clearest utterances of human duty, Christ comes and does. ... What we [lack] is not law, but power, and what the Gospel gives us, and stands alone in giving us, is not merely the knowledge of the will of God, and the clear revelation of what we ought to be, but the power to become it. Love does that, and love alone. ... When Christ comes into my heart,” he says, “then all the obscene and twilight-loving shapes that lurked there, and defiled it, will vanish like ghosts at cock-crowing before His calm and pure Presence. He, and He alone, entering my heart by the portals of my love, will coerce my evil and stimulate my good. And if I love Him, I shall keep His commandments.” “We love

Him because He first loved us,’ and such love will flower and [bear] fruit in obedience. I shall keep His commandments when I love Him. I shall love Him with a love that makes my will [submissive to Him] and my life a glad service, when by faith I grasp Him as the Incarnate Lord, ‘who loved me and gave Himself for me.’”

With loving obedience set as the foundation for living the successful Christian life set before them, the Lord Jesus continues by identifying three of the benefits of loving Him as they keep His commandments: the promise of the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father, and Jesus’ own peace. First, is the promise of the Holy Spirit: Jesus says in verse sixteen, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

After His death and His ascension into heaven, Jesus promises to intercede on their behalf and ask the Father to send this Helper. Once again, the “I” is emphatic--“I Myself will ask the Father.” In other words, He’s saying, “As you do your part on earth in loving Me and following my commandments, I will do My part in heaven--I will pray, and the Father will send.”

Older versions have Jesus asking the Father to send “another **Comforter**,” while more recent translations read “another **Counselor**” or “another **Advocate**,” while still other versions simply give the Greek work an English sound: “another Paraclete.” As the word was used in John’s day, it referred to “one called to the side of another,” for the purpose of helping in some way, especially in legal proceedings, so that the word “Advocate” fits quite well. The Holy Spirit, as our Advocate, pleads the cause of the believer against the charges of Satan and the world, and pleads Christ’s cause with the believer.

But the word means far more than that. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter in the sense that He brings comfort and support in difficult times, and strengthens us by His presence and power in us.

He is “another” “Comforter, Advocate, or Helper,” because Jesus has been standing in that position and fulfilling that role while He was present with them. Now, this One He will ask the Father to send will replace Him and carry on His work. They were to look for a Person, not a vague influence or an impersonal source of power. The Helper is a divine Person--the Third Member of the Trinity--who would be by their sides because of their faith, love, and obedience; to be their Strength in weakness, their Peace in trouble, their Wisdom in darkness, their Guide in every perplexity, their Righteousness when sin was strong, their Victor over temptation, and their ever-present Companion.

This One Who helps us, Jesus says, will “be with us forever.” Jesus had only been with the disciples for three-and-a-half years, but the Holy Spirit would never leave them. He would be their constant Guide and Encourager.

In verse seventeen, the Lord tells us that this Helper is “the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.” He is the Spirit of Truth because, as the “other” Helper, He, like Jesus, is the Truth. In verse 26, Jesus tells them that the Holy Spirit will teach and remind them. In chapter fifteen, verse 26, He says the Holy Spirit will bear witness to Christ. In chapter sixteen, Jesus says the Spirit will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, and that this Helper would guide the disciples into all truth--He would teach them the truth and keep them from falling into untruth, and they would then share that truth with others.

But the world can't know this Spirit of Truth or the truth that He provides. “The world” as John uses the term here, refers to all who are entirely under the influence of the things of this world and ruled by the prince of this world--meaning all those who have not placed their trust and hope in Christ. Because unbelievers are estranged from God, they cannot learn from the Holy Spirit as their Teacher or Comforter.

Not only can they not experience Him as the Teacher of all truth, they can't see Him because their eyes are blinded to the things of God--they lack spiritual vision. They walk by sight, and not by faith. So, what they can't see, hear, touch, taste, or smell, makes no sense to them. Paul tells the believers in Corinth in the second chapter of his first letter to them, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." As great as the accomplishments in science and every other academic discipline have been, those who seek to understand the world and how it operates who have not entrusted their lives to Christ cannot fully understand or appreciate the world they're trying so hard to comprehend and explain.

Because, as Paul writes in Second Corinthians, chapter four, verse four, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God," they don't have the spiritual eyes to see and know this Helper. In the Word of God, "to know" often means more than the act of the mind in simply understanding something. Here it means the understanding of the heart; and because unbelievers don't desire the help or the advocacy or the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they don't have the experiential knowledge to embrace Him and learn from Him. They have no love for Him, so they reject Him. "The world cannot receive Him, because it does not see Him or know Him."

But "You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." The world can't receive, because it doesn't know. The disciples know, because they receive. These disciples knew Christ in a very limited way. When He would leave them and the Holy Spirit would come, they would know Him more and more. So He says, "He dwells" or "abides with you" now, and "He will be in you" in the days to come. There is a greater experience awaiting them in a little over a month at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would come in full manifestation. From that moment on, the Holy would Spirit not only

stands by their sides to help, comfort, and advocate for them, but He actually dwell within them as He dwells within us today.

With this powerful promise of the indwelling, abiding, personal presence of the Holy Spirit Who would be everything Jesus had been for them resonating in their hearts and minds, the Lord Jesus assures them once again of His provision for them. They're still confused about what's going to happen, so, in verses eighteen through 24, He tells them about the effect the coming of the Holy Spirit would have upon them and how they could be confident in **whatever** the future would bring.

Beginning in verse eighteen, He says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

Once again, Jesus addresses them tenderly and says He would show them the kindness of a parent, and, even though He was going away, He would provide for their future welfare. Even while He was absent, they would still be cared for, and, even though He would die, He would live again; even though He would return to heaven where He had come from, they would be reunited.

He would not leave His little children / fatherless. He will come to them and would be with them in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He's not referring here to His Second Coming, but coming to them after His resurrection and ascension when the Holy Spirit would come upon them at Pentecost, otherwise they and we would be left as orphans until His Second Coming.

In just a few hours, He would be arrested and crucified, and the world would see Him no more. The word we have translated here as "see" is not the word that only refers to sensing the appearance of something. It's the word that refers to the perception by the mind or the spirit--perceiving, more than recognizing. It would have been by the very hands of those who would cry out, "Crucify Him," that the people of the worldly mind and heart would bring

an end to His physical life and cause Him to be seen no more by them--no more, at least, until they stand before the judgment seat of Christ when they will see Him again. Only then will they perceive that they have crucified the Lord of Glory.

In spite of what the world would do, **they**--His disciples--would see Him again. After His resurrection and when He would come to them in the Person of the Holy Spirit, they would see Him again. Even more than this, because He lives, they will live also.

When Jesus debated with the Jews in chapter five, He explained His relationship with the Father to them. In verse 21, He said, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it." The eternal life of every believer depends on the everlasting life of Christ. Because we are united with Him, we share in the life that He lives, even as Paul explained to the believers in Ephesus when he wrote to them in the second chapter, verse four: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

When the day soon comes when the world won't see Him, they will see Him with the eyes of faith by the power of the Holy Spirit--verse twenty: "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." Very soon, they would come to know, through their experience of receiving the Holy Spirit and the guidance He will provide, that the presence of the Spirit is the presence of Christ, and, through Him, they will have access to the Father.

Once again, it seems that John is giving us the Cliffs Notes version of what Jesus said as he shifts gears to return to what the Lord had said earlier about loving Him and keeping His commandments in verse 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.” In verse fifteen, we heard Him say, “If you love me, you will obey what I command.” If the affection of our hearts is set on Jesus, we naturally won’t want anything interfering with that relationship; so, of course, we’re going to do whatever it is He tells us to do. Our genuine love for Him will always be seen in our loving, grateful obedience to Him.

Not only this, but those who love Him will be loved by the Father because of the unity between the Father and the Son. That love comes full circle in that we are loved by the Son because we love Him. And when we love Him, and the Father loves us, and Jesus loves us, the Lord says He will reveal Himself to us.

At this point, one of the disciples ventures forth with a question that was surely on the minds of all of them--verse 22: “Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?’” From Matthew’s list of the disciples found in chapter ten of his gospel and Mark’s list in chapter three, we know that the other Judas was also known as Thaddeus or, as some manuscripts read, Labbaeus. John certainly doesn’t want his readers to confuse this Judas with the betrayer, so he makes it clear that this Judas who posed the question was not Judas Iscariot.

This was the fourth interruption of our Lord as He spoke to His disciples that night. Peter wanted to know where He was going and why he couldn’t come along. Thomas complained that he didn’t know where He was going and didn’t know the way, either. Philip asked to see the Father and said that would be enough for him. Now Judas wants to know why Jesus will reveal Himself to them but not to the world. It was a question that the Lord was pressed to answer on many occasions as people demanded a sign--some display of power--as they looked to Him to restore the glory that was Israel. If He **was** the King of Israel, why would He not reveal Himself to the entire world?

It was only a few days ago that Jesus seemed to have begun to do what they had always wanted Him to do: reveal Himself to the world as He entered Jerusalem in glorious procession. And now, Judas thinks something must have happened in order to make Him change His mind and go back to the old plan of a hidden kingdom. “Jesus, have your plans changed? We thought there would be no better way to win the support of all the Israelites than to publicly declare Yourself to be the Messiah.”

The only answer that Jesus gives to Judas--not Iscariot--is to repeat the assurance that He will reveal Himself to every loving and obedient disciple--a promise that points forward to the illumination that the Spirit would give. He doesn't even speak to Judas' question, but this was typically what Jesus did when He was asked about the destiny or the duty of other people.

In chapter 21, we'll hear Jesus rebuke Peter for asking about what would happen to John. In Luke, chapter thirteen, we read of someone who asked Him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?” In reply, He commanded, “[You] Make every effort to enter through the narrow door,” and explained this command with an illustration from life--not answering the question, but directing those in the crowd to focus on their own pursuit of being one who would be saved.

So, in verse 23, “Jesus answered 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 home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.’”

Judas had asked, “Are You only going to reveal Yourself to **us**?” Jesus replies, “If **anyone** loves Me.” “The life that I offer isn't limited to you eleven, and it never was intended to be.” Anyone could then and anyone can now respond to the Lord in faith. It wouldn't be the fanatical response of crowds stirred by Messianic fervor that would be the sign of true discipleship, for those sentiments would change in just a few hours. It would be a loving

commitment to the Lord, lived out day-by-day and revealed in obedience to His commands and His words on the part of individuals. And the invitation to follow Him in this way had gone out into all the world, and anyone could love Him if only he or she made the choice to do so.

Previously, it was those who kept His commandments; now it is those who keep His word. His word is broader than His commandments. It includes all His sayings as a united and natural whole--with no contradictions and no exceptions.

The condition of receiving the revelation that “my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him”--here again--is loving obedience: “He who loves Me will be loved by My Father.” Here we find yet another example of how Jesus reveals Himself to us as John wrote in verse eighteen of the first chapter. Not only will we experience the love of the Father in every way the Lord Jesus loves us, He says, “we will come to him and make our home with him.” Because we love the Lord, we will enjoy God’s presence forever as He makes His dwelling place in our hearts--a temple fit for Him as Paul tells the Corinthians in First Corinthians chapters three and six.

Love is revealed in obedience, and keeping His word is proof of our love for Him. But the reverse is also true--verse 24: “Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.” Real love // real obedience. No love // no obedience. Although the Lord Jesus offers His love to all the world, not all the world will receive Him, even as John has shown us in many ways and on several occasions. The world doesn’t love Jesus and doesn’t keep His commandments because it’s spiritually incapable of understanding and enjoying the benefits of such revelations of God and Christ, and unbelievers don’t keep His words because they don’t have the Holy Spirit or the spiritual discernment He provides. There’s no power that will lead us to true obedience to Christ except the power of His love. His commandments are too foreign to

our hearts and minds to be kept, unless by the power of authentic, self-giving love in response to His love.

Alexander MacLaren writes, “There is no keeping of Christ’s commandments without love. ... Reluctant obedience is no obedience; self-interested obedience is no obedience; constrained obedience is no obedience; outward acts of service, if the heart [is not driven by love], are rubbish Morality without religion is [nothing]. The one thing that makes a [person truly good] is love to Jesus Christ; and where that is, there, and only there, is [true] obedience.”

It also follows that disobedience to Christ is disobedience to God--“The word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.” Christ’s words are the Father’s words, and He has spoken nothing but what God has told Him to speak. Since the failure to love Jesus is disobedience to Him, and if disobedience to Him is disobedience to God, then it’s true that unloving obedience is what keeps people from enjoying the blessings of God making His home in their hearts. As MacLaren writes, “What brings Him is the obedience of love; what repels Him is alienation and rebellion. If the heart be full of confusion, of the world, of self, of unbridled inclinations, of careless indifference to His bleeding love, He can but listen at the gate and hear the [disorder and turmoil] within.” “The absence of [someone’s] love [for Christ],” he says, “is [his] ruin.”

In verses 25 through 31, Jesus pauses to summarize His final words to them there in the Upper Room: “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, 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 have said to you.”

The things He’s been explaining to them--the comfort, the encouragement, and the commands He’s given them--all came from His lips while He was with them. When He departs, the Father will send the Helper, the Advocate, the

Comforter--the One Whom Jesus identifies as the Holy Spirit--and He will resolve all their concerns and cause them to remember everything He had told them. At just the right moment, the Holy Spirit would remind them of something Jesus had said that they might otherwise have forgotten, and would reveal to them the meaning and application of the things He had said. There have been so many things Jesus has already told them that they didn't have a clue about, in spite of the number of times He told them and the word pictures He had drawn to help them understand.

For example, in John, chapter two, when the Jews demanded an explanation for His driving out the money-changers and sacrifice-sellers from the Temple, He told them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They had no idea what He was talking about. But John explains in verse 22: "After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken." One day, they will know and understand so much more than He has taught them. His teaching would be the necessary foundation of what would come later, but then / much, much more would be added to the foundation He had laid.

As Jesus prepares to depart, he wants to present them with a gift, and what better gift could He give / than His peace--verse 27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Peace was a common word of greeting and farewell among the Jews--a prayer of blessing for contentment and happiness. But as our Lord offered peace to His disciples, it was far more than a mere formality. It came from the One Who had the power to establish peace and to bestow it on all who receive Him by faith--the One Who is Himself the Prince of Peace.

Earlier in this chapter, He had urged them not to be troubled and explained why they should not be. He told them why He was about to leave them, then promised that He would return and that He would send the Holy

Spirit in His place to comfort, teach, and guide them. Through all these truths and promises, He was providing for their peace in the time of His approaching departure.

His peace that **He** imparts. **He** gives His peace because He gives Himself; and, as He gives Himself, His peace is inseparable from His presence and His Person. He gives us His peace by reconciling us to God by removing the burden of our past guilt and giving us access to God's favor. So, Paul tells the believers in Rome in the fifth chapter of his letter to them, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand." We are at peace with God--the sovereign Judge over all creation in spite of our sin--, and that peace overflows in inexhaustible abundance into every area of our lives to bring contentment and wholeness as we realize we are God's friends.

His peace is nothing like the kind of peace the world tries to pass off as peace. Although many people think they can find peace in possessions, pleasure, fame, wealth, drugs, alcohol, or power, these things can never bring the peace that our hearts were created for. One of Satan's most effective tricks is to counterfeit God's gifts, and he does so by offering us things that claim to bring us peace--things that we run to, expecting them to relieve the aching in our hearts for what truly matters, for what is good and true and lasting and real, but it's an empty peace--a hollow deception. Our Lord's peace and His peace alone is what our hearts long for, even as the songwriter of old spoke: "What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace, Buried deep in the heart of my soul; So secure that no power can mine it away, While the years of eternity roll! Peace, peace, wonderful peace; Coming down from the Father above! Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray / In fathomless billows of love!"

With His peace, we need not let our hearts be troubled. If Jesus gives them--gives us--His own peace, what place is there for doubt and fear? Peace was the most precious gift our Lord could give His little children in this

moment of uncertainty and confusion. And there's so much more we could add here.

As our Lord concludes these wondrous moments with His disciples, He leaves them with these words: "You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father."

Once again, He reminds them of the fact that He's going away, but that He will come again to them. The disciples are to put away their doubts and fears because He's going to prepare a glorious place in heaven for them so they can be where He is, because he is the Way to the Father, He is the truth that sets them free, He is the Life in all the abundance it was meant to be, and, because they have seen the Father in the Son, because they will carry on the work of Christ after He's gone, because they will do all this in the power of another Advocate or Helper, because the Holy Spirit will reveal Him as He had revealed the Father, as the Father and Son would come and take up residence in their loving and obedient hearts, and because He would give them His peace.

If they were still confused after all this, He directs them back to His relationship with them, by challenging their whole thought process in saying, "If you love Me." It's a tender, half-playful appeal. There was no real doubt of their love, but it was an uninformed, unintelligent, underdeveloped love. He's not questioning their love for Him, but reminding them of it and the important role their love for Him has in preparing them for what lay ahead.

If they were still holding on to the popular, misguided, mistaken ideas about the Messiah--as we've seen in Judas' question in verse 22--that could

make them slow to believe and embrace what He was telling them even now. So, He's saying, "If you had the proper love for Me, you'd be celebrating! Instead of grieving at My departure, you would rejoice in the plan that's almost complete--the plan that requires Me to die and give My life as a ransom for many and to return to heaven so that even greater blessings would come to you through the Holy Spirit." Perfect love would then cast out all fear.

They should rejoice because, He says, "I am going to the Father for the Father is greater than I." Jesus isn't comparing His nature with that of the Father. He's comparing His current **condition** with that of the Father. Jesus was limited in His physical body here on earth. As a result, His going to the Father would be a gain--not only to Himself--but to the disciples as well, for, having ascended and being seated at the right hand of the Father, He will have the opportunity to fulfill His promises to the disciples and to expand His kingdom in a way that He could not have done when He was on earth.

And now, He says in verse 29, "I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe." "These things are written," John says as he nears the conclusion of his gospel, "so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." "So that you might believe" was the reason Jesus was telling them these things. Their trust, their confidence, their hope in Him was the goal He was leading them to. Once they realized that events were coming to pass exactly as the Lord had told them, their faith in Him would flower and bear rich fruit, and their confidence in Him would be firmly established.

In verse 29, our Lord goes on to warn His disciples of the ultimate, spiritual battle that's about to take place as Satan and all the forces of evil align themselves against the Lord, but, He tells them, "He has nothing in Me"--his power stops here, and he will not prevail. And we know that the victory that our Lord won over Satan, sin, and death is available to all His sheep--all those who love the Lord and keep His commandments. And, once again, there's so much more we could add here.

With this final message of the sending of the Holy Spirit, the assurance of the Father's love, and the promise of His peace, He tells them at the end of verse 31, "Rise, let us go from here." The Lord then leads His disciples from the Upper Room through the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane. He's assured them of His presence and reassured them of the comfort and help of the Holy Spirit. He's encouraged them to demonstrate their love for Him by keeping His commandments and His word. And He's blessed them with His peace. All too soon, their love, their faith, and their confidence would be put to the test.

Thank you for being a part of our brief overview of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus seen through John's eyes that's meant to lead you to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, by believing in Him, you might experience the fullness of life that can only come in Him.

Next week, the Lord Jesus continues His conversation with the eleven disciples as they make their way to the Garden of Gethsemane and offers an illustration of the love that He's spent so much time reminding them of. After He speaks of Himself as the vine and us as the branches in the first eight verses of chapter fifteen,--the subject of Trey's sermon--the Lord will apply that illustration in verses nine through seventeen as our vital unity with Christ is revealed in our love, our obedience, and our joy.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

The resources for this lesson include Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes (1834), text courtesy of Internet Sacred Texts Archive; The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, text courtesy of BibleSupport.com; The Expositor's Bible, text courtesy of BibleSupport.com; The Expositor's Greek Testament - Nicoll, Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com; Exposition of the Entire Bible by John Gill (1746-63), text courtesy of Internet Sacred Texts Archive; ICC New Testament commentary on selected books, Text Courtesy of

BibleSupport.com; Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical (John Peter Lange) text courtesy of BibleSupport.com; Expositions Of Holy Scripture, Alexander MacLaren, text courtesy of BibleSupport.com; and The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010 by BibleSoft, inc.