

Parting Words
“Not Your Standard Sales Pitch”

John 16.1-15
Small Group Discussion

Intro Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- Have you ever experienced “bait and switch” sales techniques? What happened?
- Do you feel that Christians ever use “bait and switch” tactics to woo people to the Christian faith? Why or why not?

Pray: Invite the Holy Spirit to be present and to guide your discussion of God’s word.

Read John 16:1-15, then discuss the following.

- In today’s passage, we drop into the middle of Jesus discussing a theme. Based on v. 1, what is the reason that he is discussing this theme?
 - Why might his early followers have “fallen away” apart from this warning?
 - Why might a follower of Jesus “fall away” today? Have you seen that happen? What caused it?
 - Are there any things that could tempt you to “fall away” from Jesus?
- What kind of experience, generally, is Jesus saying will happen to his followers in vv. 2-4?
 - On Sunday, Josh said that we should expect great difficulty if we follow Jesus. Do you think this is an accurate statement? Why or why not? Have you had this experience?
 - What is the significance of Jesus saying that his followers will be put out of the synagogue? (The synagogue was the center not only of religious life, but also of social life in Jewish towns. To be put out would be to be cut off from all social connections.) How may this principle apply to us today?
 - Have you ever experienced social difficulty as a result of following Jesus? What was it like? How did you get through it?
 - Jesus also predicts that some people will kill his followers, thinking that doing so is honoring to God, because to follow Jesus is “heresy” in the eyes of Judaism and the world. Have you ever experienced physical persecution as a result of following Jesus? If not, have you ever felt that you’ve been viewed as a “heretic” by the majority around you?
 - On Sunday, we noticed a sobering warning, implicit in v. 3. Of whom is Jesus speaking when he says, “They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me?”
 - How is the following possible? (Excerpt from Sunday’s sermon) *“You can possess all the biblical knowledge in the world, be a master at religious rituals, go to a house of worship every day of the week, and still not know God. And as a result, you can end up committing horrible atrocities.”*
 - This mentality can make you feel superior to others. What is the antidote to this mentality?
- Why are Jesus’ followers “filled with grief?” (v. 6)

- How can he say that it is for their (and our) good that he is going away? (v. 7)
 - Do you think it's accurate to say that we, as followers of Jesus, should expect great good?
- In vv. 8-11, Jesus describes one great role that the Advocate (Holy Spirit) will play. How would you summarize that role?
 - Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit convincing someone of the gospel of Jesus? How did the Spirit do that in your life?
- In vv. 12-15, Jesus describes another great role that the Holy Spirit will carry out in our lives. Pastor Josh summarized it as follows: *the Holy Spirit will continually, all throughout your life, open up for you the inexhaustible riches of knowing Jesus.*
 - How have you seen this aspect of knowing Jesus play out recently?
 - Are you experiencing Jesus in new ways in this season of your life?
- New Testament Scholar Lean Morris writes: "The [Holy] Spirit is not a guide and a helper for those on a straight way perfectly able to manage on their own. He comes to assist people caught up in the thick of battle and tried beyond their strength."
 - Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
 - Have you experienced this to be true in your life?
- In this current moment in your life, would you say that you are experiencing great difficulty in following Jesus, great good, or both? Explain.
 - How do you most need the Spirit to help you in this season? In a moment, pray for one another in these matters.

PRAYER:

- If you have time, go to the following website: <http://www.OpenDoorsUSA.org>.
 - Click on "Stories" near the top of the page, and watch one or more stories of persecuted Christians in other parts of the world. Then spend some time praying for them.
- If you haven't already shared about other particular needs in your life, be sure to do that, and pray for one another.