

## ***The Upper Room - Study Nine***

What would it be like to spend five hours with Jesus the night before He was crucified? In the Farewell Discourses of John 13–17, our Lord spent close to that amount of time in a period that began with His washing the disciples' feet and ended with His High Priestly Prayer. In this series, Dr. Sinclair Ferguson explains these chapters in order to bring us into a greater knowledge of our Saviour. Dr. Ferguson shows us the heart of Jesus and the hearts of His disciples during a time of anxiety but also approaching glory. In the process, we see clearly the need for the centrality of Christ in Christian life and worship.

### **Getting inside their Heads**

#### **MESSAGE INTRODUCTION**

So far in this series, the Upper Room Discourse has taken the disciples on a roller coaster of emotions, especially with the pronouncement of betrayal and denial within the inner circle of disciples. If that was not enough, Jesus would depart from them and leave behind terrible opposition that was supposed to be of no surprise. Now, He says that He has many more things to tell them, but they “cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). Jesus does not overwhelm them with more, but does remind them that the Holy Spirit as Counsellor will guide them in all the truths that will be revealed later. Jesus now addresses them as though He were answering their unspoken questions. In this lesson, Dr. Ferguson deals with important questions and the answers Christ lovingly and sensitively gives.

#### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

John 16:1–15

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. To recognize that the teaching of Christ is a preservative against falling away
  2. To realize that, as the Spirit helps us through the Word of Christ, we bear witness to Christ Himself
  3. To appreciate the fact that Christ in His wisdom withholds the details of the future from us for the good of His disciples
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## QUOTATION

*No man can know Jesus Christ unless he is taught of God. There is no doctrine of the Bible which can be safely, thoroughly, and truly learned, except by the agency of the one authoritative teacher. Ah! tell me not of systems of divinity; tell me not of schemes of theology; tell me not of infallible commentators, or most learned and most arrogant doctors; but tell me of the Great Teacher, who shall instruct us, the sons of God, and shall make us wise to understand all things. He is the Teacher; it matters not what this or that man says; I rest on no man's boasting authority, nor will you. Ye are not to be carried away with the craftiness of men, nor sleight of words; this is the authoritative oracle, the Holy Ghost resting in the hearts of his children.*

- C.H. Spurgeon

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Jesus rebukes the disciples for the fact that they cannot bear all that He has to tell them.

a. True

b. False

2. Jesus at times anticipated the questions of His disciples, then answered them.

a. True

b. False

3. To the question, "Why are you telling us these things now?" Jesus answered:

a. Because I was with you

b. To keep you from falling away

c. For the advantage of the world

d. Each day has its own trouble

4. To the question, "Why did you not tell us these things before?" Jesus answered:

a. Because I was with you

b. To keep you from falling away

c. For the advantage of the world

d. So My joy would be in you

5. To the question, "Why are you leaving us?" Jesus answered:

a. Because I was with you

b. To keep you from falling away

c. For the advantage of the world

d. Each day has its own trouble

6. The Holy Spirit was coming to convict the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

a. Church

b. Disciples

c. World

d. Jews

7. The coming Holy Spirit would be of advantage to the world for the following

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Reasons:

- a. Convicting of sin, righteousness, and judgment
- b. Causing greater results than when Jesus was bodily present
- c. Bringing glory to the Saviour in the conversion of sinners
- d. Both a and b
- e. All of the above

8. The coming Holy Spirit would be of advantage to the disciples for the following reasons:

- a. Leading them into a greater knowledge of Jesus
- b. Leading them into greater fellowship with the Godhead
- c. Allowing them to perform greater miracles of healing
- d. Both a and b
- e. All of the above

## **BIBLE STUDY**

1. Examine Matthew 6:34 in light of Jesus' mentioning troubles in John 16:1 ("these things") that certainly extend beyond that day. How do we reconcile these two verses, since the former seems to say, "Just focus on the day at hand"?

2. Regarding the advantage of the Holy Spirit to the world, what is the connection between the mass conversion in Acts 2 and the greater things promised in John 14:12? What is the key phrase in this verse for a right understanding of it? How do these verses relate to the victorious promise mentioned in Matthew 16:18? In answering this, it is vital to reflect upon Matthew 16:21.

3. In Dr. Ferguson's book *The Holy Spirit*, he observes the connection between the promise in John 16:8–11 and fulfilment in Acts 2:22–24. Thus, the truth of Christ's exaltation (in fulfilment of Joel 2:28; Ps. 16:8–11; 110:1) is manifested by the Spirit's convicting Peter's hearers of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Note how Peter's sermon focuses on this threefold conviction in Acts 2:22–24.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Think of a situation in which you had sad news and chose to limit it or not to share it at all with a young child. Why did you withhold such information? How does this help you understand the approach of Jesus to His disciples? How does He continue to approach us in this way today?

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2. Dr. Ferguson relates the principle “We cannot have tomorrow’s grace before the day dawns.” In light of Jesus’ withholding things from His disciples for their protection, how should this principle instruct Christians individually and the church corporately?

3. Dr. Ferguson calls attention the Irish monk Brendan of Birr of the sixth century, who was asked by the pagan King Brude, “If I believe your message, and become Christ’s man, what shall I find?” Brendan replied, “You shall stumble upon wonder upon wonder - and every wonder true!” In light of this lesson and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, explain what this response means.

## **APPLICATION**

1. Why is it that we struggle so much to make sense of every trial that comes into our lives? It seems, as well, when we do not have all of our questions answered by God, that we can so easily question Him and the justice of what is going on. How can this lesson and the truths of the passage at hand be used as a safeguard against that?

2. We may never preach a Pentecost sermon, but we have the Holy Spirit to guide us into the truth, which in turn is used to convict others. With the powerful working of the Spirit pleading the cause of Christ, we can take heart when witnessing to others. We can lay aside the mentality that says, “It is of no use to share the gospel with such a person; he will never come to Christ.” Would we not have said the same thing of the Apostle Paul?

3. How did the Brendan quote affect you? Have you experienced this truth in the Christian life as you, perhaps for years and years, keep stumbling upon wonder after wonder? This ought to be the case for every child of God guided in the way of truth by the Holy Spirit. Let us lay hold of the psalmist’s burden to cry out for such wonders, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Ps. 119:18).

## **FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*

R.C. Sproul, *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit*

C.H. Spurgeon, “The Comforter,” a sermon delivered on January 23, 1855

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