



Encountering the Light Revealed in the Gospel of John

#6

Saint John 16,17,18

What a special love it is that caused God the Father to send His only begotten Son Jesus Christ into the world to die for our sins. In Jeremiah 31:3 we read, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness I have drawn thee”.(KJV) As we examine John 16-18 we encounter this wonderful love of God manifested in Jesus Christ. This divine love caused Him to go to the cross and experience death in our behalf. Now Jesus warns us that, “there will even come a time when anyone who kills you will think he's doing God a favor. They will do these things because they never really understood the Father. I've told you these things so that when the time comes and they start in on you, you'll be well-warned and ready for them.”(John 16:2-4 The Message Bible) Jesus not only warns us because He loves us, He also reassures us. “But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you”. (John 16:7NIV) Jesus knew that as long as He was on the earth His love was limited to that time and place. Upon Jesus return to the Father the Holy Spirit has come enabling the love of Christ to be present through this wonderful Spirit of Truth Who has been poured out beyond all measure and limitations. “When the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, He will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is”.(John 16:13 TMB) According to John 16:8-15 what other things will the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, do when He comes?

The truth is that God loves you. He has a plan for your life and desires to do exceedingly beyond what you can even ask or think. Now Jesus, who is “the way and the truth and the life”(John 14:6) is saying to you and me, “Ask the Father for whatever is in keeping with the things I've revealed to you. Ask in My name, according to My will, and He'll most certainly give it to you. Your joy will be a river overflowing its banks”.(John 16:23,24 TMB) Jesus goes on and declares, “I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”(John 16:33 NIV) What assurance do these words from Jesus provide for you at this time?

In John 17 we see that not only has Jesus overcome the world but also He has come to give eternal life to those who believe in Him. This special chapter in John shares the great intercessory prayer of Jesus, which contains the seven benefits that His followers receive in the gift of eternal life. These benefits include the following:

1. Encountering the Light revealed in John 17:8 which show Jesus divinity and the fact He came from God the Father. “For I gave them the Words you gave Me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from You and they believed that You sent Me”.(NIV)
2. Accepting the fact that Jesus preserves His followers as explained in John 17:12. “While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me”.(NIV)
3. Experiencing the full measure of Jesus joy. “...that they may have the full measure of My joy within them”.(John 17:13 NIV)
4. Being sanctified by the truth of God’s Word. “Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth”(John17:17 NIV)
5. Having the knowledge of being sent forth into the world to share the love of Jesus. “As you sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world”.(John17:18 NIV)
6. Becoming one in Christ with fellow believers. “That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in Me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent Me... May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.”(John 17:21,23 NIV)
7. Fellowship with Christ for all eternity. “Father, I want those You have give Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world”.(John 17:24 NIV) Jesus has clearly told us, “And this is eternal life: (it means) to know (to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with, and understand) You, the only true and real God, and (likewise) to know Him, Jesus (as the) Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), Whom You have sent”.(John 17:3 Amplified Bible)

After Jesus prayers this prayer the Gospel of John takes us straight to the olive grove where Jesus is arrested. John putting the emphasis on the deity of Christ, while the other gospels emphasize His humanity, does not include Jesus agonizing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Yet after Judas betrays Jesus and Peter cuts off the right ear of Malchus, “Jesus commanded Peter, ‘Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given

Me”?(John 18:11 NIV) In the scriptures we read of several “cups”. There is the cup of salvation found in Psalm 116:13. “I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.” In Jeremiah 16:7 we read of the cup of consolation. : “...neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or mother”. Then there is the cup of joy spoken of in Psalm 23:5. “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over”.(KJV) When it comes to the cup of suffering spoken of in Matt.26:39 and John 18:11 some would have said, “my cup is full” and walked out but not Jesus. In Matt.26:39 we read, “Going a little farther He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will’”. How are you responding to the cup of suffering that has been handed to you in life? Jesus submitting to the will of the Father and out of love for each of us drank of this cup with joy knowing that God has everything under control. “...Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”(Hebrews 12:2)

As Jesus is going forward in His dignity and in His glory we see Peter warming himself around enemy fire (John 18:18) “As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, ‘you are not one of his disciples, are you’? He denied it, saying, ‘I am not.’ One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, ‘Didn’t I see you with him in the olive grove’? Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.”(John 18:25,26 NIV) Even though Jesus had told Peter that he was going to deny Him three times before the rooster crows (John 13:38) Peter still goes ahead and does it. But we should not be so hard on Peter. How many times have we “hung around enemy fires” being so concerned what others would think that we did not give Jesus the glory that is rightfully His? As we see Jesus being led away to be crucified and everyone deserting Him, we have to ask ourselves how many times have we submitted to pressures of not acknowledging that we are His followers. Yet unlike Judas Peter repented of his sin. As a result he is forgiven. What a joy it is to know that we serve a merciful God who will forgive, restore and even work through us in a mighty way as He did Peter on the day of Pentecost.

In John 18 we see the drama unfold as Pilate tries to decide what to do with Jesus. Attempts are made by Pilate to have everyone else decide for him what to do. #1. In John 18:31 he tries to get someone else to take responsibility for Jesus #2. When that failed he tried to find a way to release

Jesus by given the people a choice between Barabbas and Jesus. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. In John 18:38, 39 he declares, “I find no basis for a charge against Him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release the King of the Jews?” Pilate never though the people would demand the release of Barabbas. There was such a great contrast between Jesus and Barabbas yet the people demanded the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. Jesus had just declared, “everyone on the side of truth listens to Me.” (John 18:37) Pilate in turn responds, “what is truth”? Pilate refuses to acknowledge the truth that stood before him. He knew Jesus was innocent. “...I have found no cause of death in Him...”(Luke 23:22) “ I find no fault at all”(John 18:38 KJV) Yet in spite of the evidence Pilate does not have the courage to release Jesus. Pilate’s question found in Matthew 27:22 is one that each of us has to answer. “What shall I do, then with Jesus who is called Christ”? What are you doing with Jesus? Pilate ends up failing because instead of declaring that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, he gives into public pressure and has Jesus killed. How many today are facing a Christ less eternity because they executed Jesus in their hearts instead of surrendering their lives to Him? This is the eternal choice that exists for each of us.

Has life handed you a cup of suffering? Are you giving up or are you giving yourself to God and declaring as Jesus did, “Not My will but Thou will be done.” Have you lost family and friends? Then do as Martin Luther does in the great hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” and declare “goods, fame, child and wife, let these all be gone but the Kingdom of ours remainth”. How difficult it is for us to surrender those closest to us. Yet such surrender is necessary if Jesus is truly going to be Lord of our life. Now the question remains, “What are you going to do with Jesus who is called the Christ?”

Please join me this week as we conclude the gospel of John by reading chapters 19,20,21. As you read ask the Holy Spirit to give you new insight into the new life that Jesus provides for us both now and for all eternity.

Larry Rice