

Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 18, John 16:16-17:26

© 2024 David Turner and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. David Turner and his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 18, the Farewell Discourse, Teaching about Sorrow and a Final Prayer. John 16:16-17:26.

Welcome to our fourth and final video on the Farewell Discourse, John 13 through 17. We've been looking at this discourse as a discourse that is framed by a preamble, so to speak, in which Jesus models for the disciples the sort of values that he is now teaching and shows them the nature of true humility and that they need to be willing to humbly serve one another. So, we've been looking at the discourse proper from the end of chapter 13, verse 31, really to 16:33, and we have what we're calling here a postlude.

Not sure that's the best term, but the discourse concludes with Jesus interceding for the disciples. So, they see him acting out for them the nature of true humility, and the washing of their feet also has a spiritual symbolism of cleansing from sin. So, he teaches them about the spirit who will come and equip them, and as he finalizes his relationship with them, he seals it, if you will, with a prayer of intercession.

So that's the overall way, I guess, in which we look at the Farewell Discourse in John, chapters 13 through 17. We're now finishing the discourse, and we're in the middle of chapter 16, and noticing how after Jesus has spoken to the disciples about abiding in him as the vine and the branches, and speaking to them realistically about the persecution that will come their way, and at the same time talking with them about the way in which the Holy Spirit will aid them in their testimony to the world. Now he is going to pray for them and send them forth, if you will, after his passion.

As Jesus has been speaking with them about the work of the spirit, there is a verse that's somewhat transitional, I think, in chapter 16, verse 16. In the NIV translation, it is translated, Jesus went on to say if you're using a Bible that happens to be a red letter, I'm not sure I fully like those, but sometimes they come in handy, you can look back from 16:16 all the way back to chapter 14 and verse 22 to see about the last black letters. This is where Judas, not the Iscariot Judas, but the other one, asks Jesus about why he's not going to go public, and why is he not going to show himself to the world.

So essentially, since then, 14:23, Jesus has been speaking directly to the disciples with no interruptions or questions or anything going on. There is the transition in terms of the location at the end of chapter 14, in verse 31, where Jesus says, come now, let us leave, and they're on the move to a different place that we're still not exactly sure where that would be. So we've gone quite a ways, then, since that

question by Judas, and now 16:16, sort of, I think, is the transition to the next section of the discourse, Jesus went on to say, and we have a saying from him here, in a little while you will see me no more than after a little while you will see me, that I think transitions us into the last section of Jesus' teaching about the future and what it will hold, and ushers us into his prayer.

So, if we just do what we have been doing all along here, and notice the way in which the narrative unfolds for us, disciples don't understand this teaching that Jesus just gave in 16:16. So, they're evidently showing by their body language, their facial expression, shrugging their shoulders, whispering to one another, they don't get what he's talking about. What do you mean, a little while? What's this business? So, Jesus is perceptive of that, and so he comes to realize that they need some clarification on this matter.

So, we read in verse 19, Jesus saw they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, are you asking one another what I meant when I said, a little while you'll see me, and then after a little while you'll see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me. So, the first part of this section of chapter 16 speaks to that very question, and Jesus becomes more and more, I guess we would say, obvious about what he's speaking about, more and more plain in his words. So that sort of culminates, I guess, in verse 28, where Jesus said, I came from the Father, and I entered the world.

Now I am leaving the world, and I am going back to the Father. So, with this A-B-B-A type of parallelism, Jesus is saying very plainly to them that he is leaving, which issues a reply on their part. So, we have the disciples raising a question, and Jesus responding to it, and now the disciples are responding to Jesus in verses 29 and 30.

Now you're telling us very plainly and without figures of speech. The word figure of speech here in verse 29 is the same word that we saw back in chapter 10, *paroimeia*, figurative language, an allegory, a figurative way of speaking. So, they go on to say in verse 30, now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions.

This makes us believe that you came from God. So, in an encouraging response from them, they say, now that we understand what you're talking about, we are more than ever inclined to believe in you. Jesus responds then to them once again.

So, we have this pattern that's happening here, sort of between them raising a question and him replying. So, he says, do you really now believe? So, Jesus is being a bit, I guess, in their face with this. Are you sure you got this or not? As it were, he goes on to say a time is coming, and in fact has now come.

So, this is the type of language we've noticed before going back to chapter five, where we have sort of the realized eschatology thing going. Jesus is saying that the time has come, a time is coming, in fact, is now at hand when you'll be scattered. So, Jesus is doing a bit of realized eschatology with persecution here, saying there'll be a future time when you'll have difficulties, you'll be persecuted.

In fact, the hour has now come for that to happen already. Each to your own house, you'll leave me all alone, yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have told you these things so that in me you might have peace.

In the world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world. That is, I think, one of the high notes of the entire Gospel of John right there. It pretty much comes to being the last words of Jesus directly spoken to the disciples in public teaching.

In the Gospel of John, he has overcome the world. And so, I think that's an important Johannine theme in this gospel and in the Johannine material as a whole. Come back and talk about that some more later.

So, then we move into chapter 17, which is essentially an amazing prayer in which Jesus sort of rehashes with the Father their relationship in terms of heavenly glory. In 17, one through five, he prays directly for his disciples who are right there with him. In verses six through 19, then he begins to pray at the end of the prayer for those who will believe in him through the witness of his original disciples.

Chapter 17, verses 20 through 26. That's the flow of the passage. In terms of the structure, I think we've already just mentioned, maybe this will make it a little more clear, that Jesus has been speaking about the Spirit's witness and their witness during persecution up through 16:15.

So, he now makes the transitional statement in 16:16, you will see me no longer and then you will see me. This confuses them. So, they're sort of talking amongst themselves about it.

So, he responds to their ambiguity, and their feeling, and begins then to explain to them very clearly what's going on. So, if you compare in 16:16, you will not see me for a while and then you will see me, to what he's saying directly, I'm leaving the world and going to the Father. That pretty well gets to the conclusion, which satisfies them and they get what he's saying, to which again, he responds to their comments this time.

So, there is ambiguity and lack of clarity leading to his response, which leads them to say, now we get it, now there is clarity. So, he responds to their clarity. So, he responds to the lack of clarity and he responds to the clarity that has been achieved

and speaking again very realistically about the situation and then praying for them in chapter 17.

Some of the key ideas that I think we would want to think about here and notice and perhaps focus on in additional study, if time permits, once again, is the reality of sorrow. It's already been mentioned in 16:16, excuse me, 16 verse 6, that you are filled with grief because I have said these things to you. So basically, you're filled with grief that I'm leaving and that's compounded by the fact that I've told you things are going to be difficult.

So, he comes back to that theme once again in verses 20 through 22. Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice and no one will take away your joy. And that day you will no longer ask me anything.

Very truly, I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Till now you've asked for nothing in my name, and you will receive that your joy may be complete. So, it seems that Jesus is saying there that even though you are sorrowful and you are grieving, verse 22, I will see you again and you will rejoice.

So, the most simple way of understanding that, I suppose, is to see Jesus as saying to them after the resurrection, I will appear again to you. But the words that follow verse 22 make it seem like perhaps he is speaking about something more lasting than that. In that day, he says, you'll no longer ask me anything.

The Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. That seems to be a rather open-ended statement. And so, it might imply that Jesus isn't speaking so much about seeing them again personally after the resurrection, but about his ongoing relationship with them through the Holy Spirit from then on.

Not just a relatively short period after the time of the resurrection. So, there is going to be grief, but that grief will go away because they will see Jesus again. They will realize that their relationship with him is not over.

He will be back to see them after the resurrection. And I think another piece of that is that he'll continue his relationship with them through the Holy Spirit. So coupled with the grief, there is the reality of persecution.

So, we read quite a bit about persecution as chapter 16 concludes, just as we noticed it in the second half of chapter 15. Jesus sort of summarizes all of that in these words in chapter 16 verse 32. Time is coming.

The fact has come when you will be scattered. This is very clearly then speaking directly about what will happen when Jesus is arrested. And we'll begin to read about that in our next video in chapter 18.

So, you will be scattered each to your own house. You will leave me all alone. But I'm not alone because my father is with me.

And there seems to be something of an analogy here between Jesus and them. It comes the time when they will be persecuted. They will feel like they are alone, but they're not because Jesus will be with them through the spirit.

Just as Jesus himself was not alone when the disciples scattered and left him alone because the Father was with him. I've told you these things so that in me you might have peace. It's interesting that we often think of the word peace as if peace means the absence of any turmoil, struggle, or problem and difficulty.

All if only we could have peace, we say. What we mean is if only life's problems would go away. That's certainly not what Jesus meant here when he spoke of peace because he went on to say in the world you will have trouble.

So, the type of speech Jesus is describing is not the absence of problems or the absence of difficulties or having everything going smoothly. In the world, you will have trouble. So, it's almost like the way we think about peace and troubles that Jesus is contradicting himself.

I've told you these things so that you might have peace. In the world, you will have trouble. It's almost like we want to put a but in there.

But there is no but. The but comes after in the world you will have trouble. In the world, you will have trouble.

But take heart saying as it were you may have peace in the midst of your troubles if you realize that I have overcome the world. I have overcome the world. This then couples the reality of grief and the reality of persecution that we've been looking at with the reality of peace of mind.

You can have peace of mind in the midst of all these trials. John 14 has already talked to us about not letting our hearts not be troubled. Chapter 14 and verses 1 and 14:17 similarly say the world cannot accept the spirit of truth because it doesn't know him neither sees him.

But you know him for those with you and there will be in you and I will give you peace. Verse 27 is actually the verse I was looking for their apologies. Peace I live with you.

Leave with you. My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.

Don't let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid. So, if you couple the exhortation in 14:1 with that of 27 and 28 and tie 16:33 to that you can see what Jesus is saying to them about the necessity of having a settled heart, a heart fixed on God not being torn back and forth by the ups and downs of circumstances. And the thing that enables that I think to mean something is the reality of a victory in him.

This idea of overcoming the world the reality of victory in John 16:33 is an important matter I believe because this is a Johannine theme that we will see elsewhere in the gospel and in the letters and even in the apocalypse. We could take just a moment to maybe trace this theme. I think it would be beneficial to us after saying to the disciples be of good cheer you will have problems but I've overcome the world.

Jesus then overcomes the world in his death, his burial, and his resurrection and by equipping them with the Holy Spirit in chapter 20 he equips them so that they will have the capacity to serve him well in the world. And that's all we see about this in the gospel of John. It's quite clear for those who read the gospel of John and then read the letters of John particularly 1st John that there's a huge amount of correlation conceptually between the gospel and the letters.

So, we look from John and this comment of Jesus I have overcome the world and you will have peace in me despite the troubles you face to the way in which 1st John uses the idea of overcoming. So, we're sort of following the idea here of the verb *nikao* in Greek and the noun *nikkei* which has to do even going back to the Greek god Nike the goddess of God of victory and the idea of overcoming and winning the battle. So when we look at 1st John, particularly chapter 5 we read there that believers have the capacity to overcome the world.

So, everyone who is born of God 1 John 5:1 excuse me everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God by loving God and carrying out his commands.

In fact, this is love for God to keep his commands and his commands are not burdensome. Everyone born of God here we have it overcomes the world and this is the victory which overcomes the world. Even our faith who is it that overcomes the world only the one who believes that Jesus is the son of God.

So, in this way, the first letter of John takes the victory of Jesus which he says he has accomplished looking forward to the cross. I have overcome the world and it says that the one who believes in Jesus has likewise overcome the world. So, we share in the victory of Christ by our faith.

Sometimes I've heard this interpreted to mean that there are certain super Christians who have overcome the world. They are the overcomers. They have some sort of a

special level of faith or a special level of blessing from God that sets them apart from others.

They are like the upper the upper echelon of Christians. They are I don't know it's hard not to think of this in military terms. They are the special forces.

They are the Green Berets. They are the whatever. But it seems apparent to me that the way John is speaking about this is not that, that there are certain special Christians who have this.

But everyone who believes in Jesus shares in his victory. According to first John Chapter 5 verses 4 and 5. You may recall also that in the apocalypse the book of Revelation there is a reference to overcoming as well. And we can find such references going even into Chapter 5 verse 5 which I think helps us understand exactly what the heart of this is.

You'll recall that Revelation chapters 4 and 5 is a vision and from the heavenly throne room. And we have various angelic beings and evidently representing the church. We have a group called the 24 elders.

So, one of the elders said to me Revelation 5 5 don't weep. See the line of the tribe of Judah the root of David a lot of Old Testament imagery here has triumphed. Of course, the word triumphed here in 5 5 is what Jesus said back in John 16 33.

I have overcome the world. So, he is able to open the scroll and it's seven seals. With this in mind again that reaffirming that Jesus by his redemptive work has overcome the world.

We are reminded at the conclusion of nearly well of all the letters to the seven churches. There is a promise made to the overcomer. We won't take the time to look at every single one of those.

But we have references to the overcomer as well in all those seven letters. So, it behooves us to figure out and to study and to reflect a bit on what is meant by the idea that I have overcome the world. But in light of that, it also behooves us to think about what Jesus meant by the world.

So, if he's overcome the world what does he mean I have overcome the world? Often when we think about the term world we think we're talking about today we would say well maybe it's the solar system or maybe it's the planet. Or something along those lines a material or some sort of a spatial entity.

And I think there are places in John where the world is used that have those sorts of connotations perhaps. But that is not so much the focus in John even though it's

there now and then. The focus in John is much more along the lines that the world is an ethical entity.

It's some sort of an entity a system a complex of ideas that have ethical overtones and typically that have bad ethical overtones. So, when Jesus says I have overcome the world he's I think he is speaking about things that we would notice elsewhere in John. So, we know elsewhere in John that the world was created by God.

He came, he made the world he was in the world and the world was made by him. Yet the world knew him not the world wanted nothing really to do with him. And more recently in our context here we're dealing with John chapter 14 when Jesus introduces the spirit of truth.

He says in 14:17 that the world does not accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. So, this world is hostile to the spirit of God whom Jesus is sending. We look a little bit further into the discourse here to 15 verses 18 and 19.

If the world hates you keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belong to the world it would love you as its own. But as it is you don't belong to the world.

But I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. So obviously there is a sense in which every human being Christian or not is a part of the world.

But there is a sense in which when people become followers of Jesus they become followers of a system of values a savior who has embodied values that are antithetical to the world's values. So, the world hates you Jesus says because it hated me first. Of course, there are other texts which have similar connotations right here in the upper room discourse.

Chapter 16 and verse 20. Chapter 17 verses 14 and 25 16 20 says now is your time of grief. Excuse me that's 22 16 20 says I tell you will weep and you will mourn while the world rejoices.

He makes it seem like that is going to be the response to Jesus' absence in the crucifixion. You will grieve but your grief will be turned to joy 16:20. Chapter 17 verse 14 in the middle of his prayer he says to the Father I have given them that's the disciples.

I have given them your word and the world has hated them for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. So, there's a sense in which the total ethical makeover that we've received from Jesus as his followers makes us people who are at odds with worldly values worldly philosophies and so are our different way of life is not appreciated by them. 17:25 Righteous Father though the world does not know you.

I know you. You perhaps are familiar as well with the text in 1st John chapter 2 which speaks about the world in a similar language should probably take a moment and look at that passage just to follow up on the thematic unity of the epistles and the gospel of John 1st John chapter 2 and verse 15. Do not love the world or anything in the world.

If anyone loves the world love for the Father is not in them everything in the world the lust of the flesh the lust of the eyes the pride of life doesn't come from the Father but comes from the world and the world and its desires pass away but whoever does the will of God abides forever. So, this triadic expression here about what is in the world lust of the flesh lust of the eyes pride of life however you want to break that down into sensuality status just the idea of pride all those things are antithetical to the values of God and the. The letter of 1st John makes it very clear that these things are not compatible with the teaching of Jesus with the values that he has given us so the world is an ethical entity that is hostile to God and what's more and what's even worse it is ruled by the devil.

So, Jesus speaks of Satan as the prince or the ruler of this world in several texts in the gospel of John going back to chapter 12 we have one here quite recently in our context in John 16 John 16 and verse 11 the prince of this world now stands condemned proleptically I think Jesus is speaking in light of the cross this is what will happen to Satan and those who oppose him. In the middle of his prayer coming up in chapter 17 verse 15, my prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one implication being that protecting Jesus' disciples from the world the values that are hostile to God involves protecting them from the evil one the one who is described elsewhere in John as the ruler of the world. The book of 1st John concludes with words that go something like this the whole world lies in the wicked one we are of God little children but the whole world lies under the domain of the authority of the rule of the wicked one.

So here we have very clearly this dichotomy this dualism between the ethical values of Jesus which are those of the Father and the ethical values of the world which are those of the devil and so believers in Jesus are warned here by Jesus that they need to beware of the world and realize that it's not going to be their friend. So the cosmos the world is a nasty place even though it was created by Jesus it's hostile to him and its ruler is the archenemy of God. So, you'd expect at this point perhaps to hear something to the effect that all God is going to do is judge the world but that's not the case.

Despite all the enmity and hostility of the world to God and the desperate wickedness of its ruler Satan in spite of all this perhaps one of the greatest amazing things in the Bible is despite all this the world is loved by God. God has not abandoned his creation even though it has turned against him God sent his son to

the world that he created and even though most of them rejected him some received him. So, God is still authorizing people from the world to become his children if they will receive Jesus as their savior and God is giving them new birth and the capacity to say to be his people.

So, we go back to remind ourselves of very common verses in John that are frequently quoted in John chapter 1 verse 29 John the Baptist said behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John 3 16 God so loved the world. In other texts the bread of life is given for the life of the world in chapter 6 I am the light of the world chapter 8 verse 12.

Jesus speaks very realistically in chapter 12 about Satan again as the ruler of the world verses 46 and 47. I've come into the world as a light so that no one who believes in me should stay in the darkness. I did not come into the world next verse to judge the world but to save the world 12 47.

So, God in a move that is I would think totally unprecedented and unexpected instead of smashing his enemies in the world those who are opposed to him. God holds out his warm embrace to the world in the person of Jesus and says come back come back to me and I will be your father once again. And we see this going on here despite the animosity of the world.

So, we end this discussion of the world by noting again that Jesus has overcome it with his redemptive work on the cross. He has destroyed the power of the evil one and has given humanity a new chance to be in fellowship with God. So he has by the power of Jesus' resurrection shown himself to be more powerful than the ruler of the world.

So, Jesus has now supplanted the ruler of the world. He is the ruler of the world. And as you put all these texts together and try to bring it to a conceptual system.

It really is played out well in Revelation where Jesus as the overcomer is described there as the line of the tribe of Judah who has vanquished the enemy and overcome the evil that is in the world. So, it's amazing then when we read about Jesus in the Gospel of John saying he has overcome the world. Not only do we have a huge profound concept that of overcoming but also a huge mass of evil in the entity of the world that Jesus has overcome.

And we could spend the rest of our time just talking about that but we need to move ahead. We read particularly in John's Gospel about the idea of glory. And as the Lord's prayer for his disciples begins in chapter 17 the theme of glory is encountered once again.

So, it behooves us to look at the background of glory in John and the way in which God has manifested himself to his people which I think has to do with what the Hebrew Bible refers to as the glory of God in the way it has operated. So, we see the glory of God way back in Exodus 33 and 34. Moses wanted a better grasp of it.

We've already seen the glory of God by this time in the Tabernacle that God directed Moses to construct that manifested God's presence to Israel in a mobile way wherever they went. But we have this reference to Moses wanting I guess just a fuller grasp, a better understanding of who God was, a more intimate relationship with all of God's attributes as well as he could understand them. I'm not sure how we exactly define the concept of glory but I think we can certainly describe it as being the revealed excellence of God's being.

So that the aggregate of all of God's attributes to the extent that they can be perceived by human beings. God's excellence, God's amazing character being revealed although in a filtered way I'm sure to the finite creatures that God has made. So that would be the glory of God.

So, for us to glorify God I think would be for us simply to acknowledge, to recognize, and to stand in awe and worship of a God of this excellence, of this character, of these indescribable attributes. So, in our thoughts and in our words and in our deeds to the extent that these are done and thought and spoken in ways that acknowledge all of God's glory and all of God's excellence in this sense we glorify God. So when we come to the Gospel of John then one of its initial teachings that I think is most crucial is that Jesus is the one who has manifested the glory of God.

Chapter 1 and verse 14. The word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory. A few verses later in verse 18 Jesus is described as the one who is the exegesis of God.

The one and only God. He is the one who has revealed him. So, Jesus is the revelator of God's glory.

So, we have many, many texts in John. We won't take the time to look at all of them where we see the glory of God being manifested by the words and deeds of Jesus. So we can't really speak of the glory of God unless we speak directly of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus' post-resurrection glorification is that which leads us to the coming of the Spirit. Told in 739 the Spirit can't come, and hasn't been fully given yet, because Jesus has not been glorified. Once Jesus has been glorified and returned to the place of glory that he has held from eternity with the Father in heaven, then the Spirit is sent to the earth to pick up where Jesus left off and to continue manifesting the glory of God to the apostles.

So, when you begin to study and read John chapter 17, you see the next piece of this because Jesus' prayer in John 17 speaks of the glory that he had with the Father in a way that I think is rather amazing to be sure. So, in 17 verse 1 Jesus said this as he looked to the Father and prayed, Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son, in other words, bring deserved praise to your Son that your Son may glorify you. This reminds us of the preface to the New Commandment back in John chapter 13 around verses 31 and 32.

He says you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the one and only God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Notice then how Jesus looks back on his ministry and he describes it in this way, I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

That's if you want to know what Jesus' ministry is like from the standpoint of Jesus in Johannine thinking, this is the ministry of Jesus in a nutshell. I brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. So, Jesus is asking the Father in response to the way his life and ministry have glorified the Father, now he's asking the Father in a reciprocal way to return glory to him.

So, verse 5 says, now Father glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. This apparently is Jesus saying to the Father, I'm about to be restored to my pre-existent position, my heavenly glory, the excellence that I was once manifesting in heaven at your side that I laid aside to become human, to become flesh. So now Jesus' way of glorifying God is going to be changed from glorifying God in an incarnate state, the word became flesh, to glorifying God and sharing in the moral excellence and value of God in a heavenly status.

So, when Jesus says here, I want the glory back that I had with you before the world came into existence, one of the clearest texts I think in the Gospel of John that explains to us what Jesus' pre-existence was like. We can't really understand fully the glory of God in the Gospel of John though unless we bring in the role of the helper, because Jesus says that once he is gone we might think the glory of God has departed and we have another Ichabod situation where there's no more glory just like there was not as the glory left the Old Testament temple according to the book of Ezekiel. But we're told in chapter 16 verse 14 that one of the things that the comforter will do, the helper, the advocate, the parakletos, the spirit, one of the things that he will do according to 16.14 is he will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

So, this is a very interesting statement about the role of the Spirit. Jesus has said elsewhere that the spirit will not speak of himself. The Spirit is not out to become like the leader of a new sect.

The Spirit is not in competition with Jesus to have a bigger church than Jesus has. Rather the Spirit comes not to start something new but to renew the disciples so that they might remember what has passed, what's been passed in the life and ministry of Jesus. It says here he will receive from me what he will make known to you.

So however we want to understand the relative value and work of the Spirit in the church and to whatever extent we reach to identify ourselves as charismatics or non-charismatics or Pentecostals or non-Pentecostals, what we all want to agree on, however we see ourselves carrying out the fullness of the Trinitarian work of God in our midst, is to acknowledge here that the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus, not to be his own entity or not to start his own movement. The Holy Spirit is Christocentric. The Holy Spirit is focused on the priority of glorifying, placing the value upon Jesus and the work of Jesus Christ on behalf of the church.

So, if that is what the spirit is about, what should we as his fathers be about? We were told back in chapter 15 in reference to bearing fruit for God in the analogy of the vine and the branches, probably the concluding verse to that analogy and Jesus teaching about it, this is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit and show yourselves to be my disciples. So all the abundance that is ours in Christ and the way in which we wish to bring forth fruit for him, that is to say, that not only the folks that we influence for good who become Christians through our ministry but all of the Christ-like character that we're able to manifest in the world so that people can see Christ in us, all of this fruit in the broadest possible sense of the term, all of this isn't done simply for ourselves or for our denomination or our movement or whatever, all this is done ultimately to glorify the father. So just as the helper comes to continue putting the priority on Jesus and continue placing the glory on him and the acknowledgment of his excellence, so that's what we're supposed to be about.

We're supposed to be people who are in line with the spirit and the spirit is in line with Jesus. So, if the spirit is Christocentric, then we better get in line with the spirit and be exactly the same. When we read the prayer of Jesus in John 17, there are so many things that we could talk about in reference to this prayer.

One way of trying to understand it, I think, is just to look at the way in which the world is described and the relationship of the disciples to the world in this chapter. One of the things that we would start off with is by noticing that in 17.6 Jesus answers and says, excuse me, I'm in the wrong chapter. Jesus says in 17.6, I have revealed you, that is, I have revealed you, Father, to those whom you gave me out of the world.

They were yours and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your word. However you understand this idea of the Father giving believers to Jesus from the world, I

suppose theologically the term we would have for this would have to be the doctrine of election.

However, you understand that, you would have to understand it as the way in which the disciples have an identity as followers of Jesus. It's not simply our idea that we want to follow him. It certainly is, but it was God's idea long before it was ours.

So, Jesus says that if we're followers of Jesus, we are people that God has given to Jesus out of the world. So, we find our identity, we find our mission, and we find our values no longer by reading the newspaper, but by reading the holy scriptures. We don't gain our worldview by looking around us and finding whatever works in the world.

We gain it, our most fundamental values and the things we cherish, the things we work toward, we gain this from the revelatory perspective of God. Speaking in theological terms then, our values don't come from the world in an immanent sense, I-M-M-A-N-E-N-T, but our values are transcendent. They come from the revelation of God in the holy scriptures.

God has chosen us out of the world. 17:9, another similar remark Jesus makes, I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

Now we know that God loves the world. He loves this entire planet full of people, many of whom do not do his will and do not follow him very closely. And we know that despite all of that, God loved the world and sent his son so that it might believe in him.

But when we read a text like 17:9, we notice that God has a special relationship with believers. And Jesus says I am interceding for them. I am praying for them.

I am not praying for the world in this particular sense. So, God has a special value that he places upon his followers, and Jesus is interceding especially for them. So, we're not only chosen out of the world as we have read but verse 11 says that the believers in Jesus are still in the world.

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world. I've heard it said that some people are so heavenly-minded minded they are no earthly good. Perhaps those sorts of people have noticed that the Bible says that God has chosen believers out of the world.

Perhaps, however, they haven't read that they still need to remain in the world. So, there's sort of a paradox in these prepositions. There's a sense in which believers are not out of the world.

They are not of the world. They don't find their ultimate identity value system and goals in life from the values of the world. Yet they are in the world.

So we are in the world, but we are not of the world. So, we continue on and notice some other statements here that are interesting. 17:14, I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

So, the otherworldliness of Jesus in terms of his values his mission, and the goals that he had to please only the Father are now to be shared by us. We don't find our greatest joy in fitting in with worldly values. We find our greatest joy even if it brings us persecution in living a life that is pleasing to God and to his Son, Jesus Christ.

17:16, again, it's repeated that believers in Jesus are not of the world even as he is not of it. At the same time, however, chapter 17, verse 18 says, as you sent me into the world, so I send them into the world. So, when you try to balance out all of these prepositions, believers are not of the world but have been chosen out of the world, yet they are in the world and they have been sent into the world.

There is a sense then in which Christians ought to be worldly, don't you think? Because if we can't relate to people who are in the world, we don't understand where they're coming from and can't speak to them in their own language, as Jesus certainly spoke to his contemporaries in their own language. If we're not able to do that, then we will be that person who is so heavenly-minded they are no earthly good. I guess the question is whether the greatest danger facing the church is the one or the other.

Are we so heavenly-minded that we're no earthly good or are we so earthly-minded that we're no heavenly good? So, when we think about how we don't find our ultimate identity in this world any longer, we find our ultimate identity in God as he has revealed himself in Christ, at the same time we realize it's not God's will to take us out of the world or for us to live as the whole church, at least a monastic lifestyle of total separation from the world. Because if we're not engaging the world, we'll never do any good as Jesus' emissaries being sent into the world. So, I think all these prepositions are quite amazing and pondering the implications of them will give us a great deal of food for thought and will be valuable for understanding what we should be doing as we live in the world.

As we finish the discussion of the world, notice that as we maybe get all these prepositions figured out and understand how it works that we're not of the world even though we've been sent into it, our unity, 17:21, will be a factor in bringing people to faith. Jesus says I'm praying that all of them might be one in 17:21. Just,

Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us that the world may believe that you have sent me.

God is still interested in this world even though he acknowledges it is hostile to him. In fact, God wants his followers to be so united to Christ and to one another that the world can see that they are different from the world and will draw the world to faith. As the prayer gets close to the end in 17:25, Jesus prays for it once again.

Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known, nor that the love which you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them. This is the last words of Jesus about his disciples in the Gospel of John, and in narrative literature, there is a principle of end stress that you tend to remember what concludes various portions of literature.

So, I think we would be quite wise to emphasize and pay attention to what is being said here. Jesus summarizes his ministry by saying, I have made you known to them. He says I will continue to make you known.

This, I think, has to assume the ongoing work of Jesus through the Holy Spirit in the life of the believers in the church. Continuing to make Jesus, continuing to make the Father known to the disciples is done in order that the love that God has for Jesus, in the words of the text, the love that you have for me may be in them and that I myself might be in them. Again, all of this language, I think, is assuming the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer as the ongoing presence of Jesus in the midst of the church.

So as our last comment on the upper room discourse of Jesus, I think we might think about all of this from a missional perspective. It appears to me then that when we consider what Jesus has done for the disciples and what he has said to the disciples in John 13-17, constitutes what might be called an ultimate apologetic. What I mean by this is that various churches are known for various distinctives in the world, and many of them are very good.

Some churches are known to be very concerned about doctrinal orthodoxy and getting God right, understanding scripture correctly. Certainly, that's a crucial aspect of the church. If the church is giving an uncertain message to the world, if its message is not clear and correct in light of scripture, it's of little or no value to the world.

Some churches are known as places where the spiritual gifts are very clearly being exercised. What do you think of that in terms of the more seemingly humble gifts of service or the more spectacular types of charismatic gifts? I'm not really

distinguishing between that here. Some churches are churches where the Holy Spirit is clearly present, however, you want to define that, and that's a good thing as well.

Some churches are known to be churches where the members, the people who go there, are treated well and are family. It's a church where you can go and really be edified, and your needs can be met, and they care about you there, and you know that when you go there, you will be loved. That, obviously, is a very important thing.

Other churches are known for their outreach into the community, and that clearly is necessary. If we don't reach out to people who are in need, how will they know anything about what Jesus has done for us? So, all these things are good, and they're all appropriate, and they're all necessary, but none of these things are things that Jesus has directly emphasized here in this discourse. In his farewell to his people, Jesus first focused on the matter of love.

Love one another as I have loved you by your loving interrelationships, by the reciprocal nature of love in the church. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples. So, this is an exhortation of Jesus to the disciples.

It's actually pretty much the very first thing that he said to them once Judas has left the group, and he's now speaking to 11 rather than 12. So, the very first thing he says to disciples who are now going to be grieving because he has just told them, I'm going away and you can't come. What might be the first thing that he would tell them that would meet their need the most? The very first thing Jesus tells them about how to behave in his absence is to love one another.

That obviously will have internal implications. The last thing you would want to see happen when Jesus leaves is for the church not to care about each other and to fragment into various sectarian parties or even individuals who are fighting one another. That obviously would not be good, but that's not the point of what he says.

He doesn't say love one another as I have loved you so you don't disintegrate. He says to love one another as I have loved you so that you have a meaningful outreach to the world. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples.

Then after the main part of the discourse, which stresses the coming of the Comforter, the Helper, the Paraclete, and the Holy Spirit, to equip the disciples and to maintain Jesus' presence with them and to enable them to hang on to Jesus and persevere in him and bear much fruit because apart from him you're not able to do anything, at the very end of the discourse where Jesus has been praying for the disciples, not exhorting them as in John 13, but praying for them in John 17, pretty much the ultimate purpose or goal of his prayer to the Father is that he wants the disciples to be one as we are one. I find that pretty amazing. It is amazing that Jesus said that we ought to love one another as he has loved us, especially when we know

that the way he has loved us if we pursue this a bit in John, is the way the Father has loved him.

So, the upshot of the initial exhortation is that the kind of love that Christians give and take with each other is the same kind of love the Father and the Son have with each other. So, at the end when he is praying, Jesus is praying that his people may be one and he's not saying that they may be one as say an antique car club might be one because they're all interested in Model T Fords or something of that nature. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but what Jesus is saying is much more amazing and profound, don't you think? That they may be one as we are one so that the world might believe that you have sent me.

Now the unity that we are intended again to project to the world is not the kind of unity that is just oriented toward one particular cause. We have plenty of political parties and clubs and various types of advocacy groups that are quite good at standing up together for one particular cause. But the unity that Jesus is speaking about here that will lead the world to believe is a type of shared life and unity and oneness that is shared by him and by the Father.

Again, don't you think this is amazing that just as we are to love one another with the same kind of love that the Trinity loves each other, we're also to be one just as the Trinity is one? I find this to be nothing less than amazing that Jesus would tell us these things in chapter 13 and pray for us this way in chapter 17. This is something that I don't think I have heard a whole lot about in Reformed theology, particularly from the standpoint of the creator-creature distinction.

That our love for one another and our unity with one another would be modeled upon that of inter-Trinitarian relationships almost sounds like heresy. But there is a teaching that I've heard in the relational side of the Trinity, the social Trinity, the way the Trinity accomplishes our redemption. The term that I've heard is called perichoresis, that what one person of the Trinity is doing is shared by the other persons of the Trinity, that there's an internal unity there and they don't operate in distinction from one another.

I guess a blunt way to put this is that we don't believe in three gods, tritheism, we believe in a triune godhead of three persons who are about one thing. The striking thing then about John 13 through 17 would be that the bookends of this discourse are basically saying to us as believers that our commitment to one another and our unity with one another and looking out for the welfare of one another ought to be modeled on the divine relationship of doing those very things. And we might say, well, that's impossible, we're mere creatures, we're fallen, we're this, we're that, we're not God.

Obviously, that's the case. But God through Jesus, through his chosen beloved apostle, beloved disciple, John has now made this analogy and telling us that we ought to get serious about modeling our relationships after those of the triune godhead. The reason why God can demand this of us and expect this of us is that in the beginning, God created us in his image.

So, it's not too much for God to ask his finite image bearers to live in such a way that models the infinite creator who made the image bearers to begin with. So as you think about how you relate to your friends in Christ, your brothers and sisters in Christ in various relationships, the people you go to church with, folks in your small group, folks in your Bible study, your neighbors, whatever, who know the Lord, just think about this, that for us to fully appreciate what John is telling us here in the upper room, in the farewell discourse, for us to fully be the people of God in living in this world, to be the kind of people that other people who don't know Christ notice and appreciate and think those people must have something going, maybe I should look into that. For that to happen, we need to be the kind of people who love one another as Christ loved us, which is how God the Father loved him, and people who exhibit the same internal deep profound unity exhibited by the Father and the Son.

It's apparent to me that given the context of John 13 through 17, the only way that we'll ever be able to come within 100 miles of being this kind of people is if we allow the ongoing presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit to rule in our lives and to lead us to abide more fully in the vine.

This is Dr. David Turner and his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 18, the Farewell Discourse, Teaching about Sorrow and a Final Prayer. John 16:16-17:26.