

Gospel of John: The Farewell Discourse, A New Commandment, and Another Helper (John 13:31-14:31)

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Abstract

This session focuses on the beginning of Jesus' Farewell Discourse in John 13:31–14:31, delivered after the departure of Judas. Dr. David Turner examines the theological significance of the New Commandment to love one another and details the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples, which is structured around five key questions. The lecture addresses complex eschatological interpretations regarding Jesus' return and explores the Christological role of the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete or Helper. Ultimately, it analyzes how the Spirit continues to guide and teach the church through the apostolic tradition and scriptures.

Outline

I. Introduction to the Farewell Discourse (John 13:31-14:31)

- A. Context: Foot washing (John 13) set as an example of humility and redemptive cleansing
- B. Setting: After the departure of Judas and the fall of night, Jesus teaches the disciples about his physical departure and future spiritual presence

II. Narrative Flow and Dialogical Structure

- A. The Mutually Glorified Relationship between the Father and the Son (John 13:31-35)
- B. The Five Disciples' Questions and Jesus' Responses
 - 1. Peter's first question: "Why can't I follow you?" (John 13:36-37)
 - a. Jesus tells him he will follow later, but cannot follow now
 - 2. Peter's second question: "Why?" and declaration of willingness to die (John 13:37-38)
 - a. Jesus foretells Peter's threefold denial
 - b. Jesus' comfort to Peter: "Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1)
 - 3. Thomas's question: "We don't know where you are going, how can we know the way?" (John 14:5)
 - a. Jesus' reply: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)

4. Philip's request: "Show us the Father" (John 14:8)
 - a. Jesus explains that seeing him is seeing the Father (John 14:9)
 - b. Promising the Holy Spirit as the comforter/advocate (John 14:16-17)
5. Judas's (not Iscariot) question: "Why show yourself to us and not to the world?" (John 14:22)
 - a. Jesus explains the division: those who love him will obey his teaching, and the Father will make a home with them
 - b. Those who do not love him will not obey his teaching
- C. Conclusion of the chapter: Transition to chapter 15 ("Come, let's go")

III. Key Theological Themes

- A. The New Commandment (John 13:34-35)
 1. Commandment to "love one another as I have loved you"
 2. Analysis of "Newness"
 - a. Not completely unprecedented (Leviticus 19:18, 33-34; Deuteronomy 7)
 - b. New in its model ("as I have loved you") and motivation (sacrificial love on the cross)
 - c. Enabled by the coming Holy Spirit
- B. The Comings of Jesus and Eschatology (John 14:2-3)
 1. Traditional view: Second Coming at the end of the age (e.g., 1 Thess 4)
 2. Comprehensive New Testament view: Earthy eschatology vs. heavenly eschatology (e.g., Matthew 6:10, John 5:28-29)
 3. Three plausible comings of Jesus in John's Farewell Discourse:
 - a. Post-resurrection appearances (John 20-21)
 - b. Coming through the Spirit (John 14:18)
 - c. End-of-the-age physical return (John 21:22-23)
 4. Tension between Future and Realized Eschatology
 - a. Inaugurated/realized eschatology (John 5:24-25, 11:21-27)
 - b. "My Father's house has many rooms" (John 14:2) as an abiding/dwelling place (meno/monē) in the present spiritual relationship
- C. The Holy Spirit as the Paraclete (Parakletos) (John 14-16)
 1. Definitions of Parakletos: legal advocate, counselor, helper, comforter
 2. Christocentric and Christological role:
 - a. Another helper sent to continue Jesus' ministry (John 14:16)
 - b. Spirit of truth revealing God's character and teaching disciples (John 14:17, 14:26)
 - c. Testifying about Jesus and convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 15:26, 16:8)
 3. Practical application: How does the Spirit teach us all things?
 - a. Rejecting strict intuitionist subjectivity (rampant subjectivity/heresy)

- b. Illumination: opening our minds to understand the Bible, or opening the Bible to us
- c. Canonical/apostolic view: promise was specifically given to original disciples (the 11) to guide them in writing the New Testament scriptures
- d. Synthesis: Spirit guides the church through the scriptures, checking intuitive promptings against objective biblical standards