

Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 16, John 13:31-14:31, Podcast Audio Overview

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All right, welcome back, everyone. Today, we are going to be taking a deep dive into John 13.31, 14.31 with some help from a really fascinating scholar, Dr. David Turner. Sounds good.

We're looking at this passage, which, as you know, is part of what's called the Farewell Discourse, a really important part of the Gospel of John. Yeah, it's really pivotal, I think, in John's Gospel because it bridges Jesus's earthly ministry and the coming of the Holy Spirit. And you see all these different things coming together, like the new commandment, Peter asking about Jesus's departure, teachings about Jesus's return.

Right. There's a lot packed in. Yeah, there is a lot packed in.

And thankfully, Dr. Turner breaks it down into really manageable chunks in his Gospel of John lectures. Yeah. And he kind of starts; he sets the scene for us.

Judas has just left, and Jesus starts talking about glorification, both his and the Father's. And it's, you know, it's like, okay, the clock is ticking. This is it.

Right. And I think Dr. Turner really highlights how emotionally charged this moment is for the disciples, because imagine you're in their shoes, you know, that Jesus is about to leave, the world's about to change drastically. Yeah.

What do you do? It would be terrifying. Yeah. And then right in the middle of all of this, Jesus gives them- well, he gives us this huge commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

Yeah. One of those verses that everybody knows. Right.

Exactly. But I think it's helpful to ask with Dr. Turner, like, is it really a new commandment? Yeah. Is it really a new commandment? Because, you know, we go back to the Old Testament, you go back to Leviticus 19, and it's, you know, love your neighbor as yourself.

Yeah. It even goes a step further and says, love foreigners the same way. Yeah.

Because you were once strangers in Egypt, right? Right. Exactly. You were once strangers, so show them love too.

Right. So it's not a new concept, this concept of love. But what is new, I think, in the way that Jesus puts it, is the how.

The how. It's a self-sacrificial love. It's a love that's willing to go all the way, even to death.

Yeah. And I think it's so challenging for us today. Like, how does that kind of love challenge us today? It feels almost impossible to live up to.

Yeah. It definitely is. It pushes us out of our comfort zone.

Are we willing to love others, even those who are difficult to love, in a way that puts their needs before our own? I don't know. I don't know. It's something to think about.

So then right after this huge challenging idea, we get Peter popping up. Yeah. Good old Peter.

Yeah. And asking a question that I think we all have asked in some way or another. He says, you know, he's confused.

Jesus is leaving. Why can't I just come with you now? It's so relatable. It's so relatable.

Yeah. And, you know, Jesus' answer is a little cryptic. It kind of hints at future possibilities, but it doesn't give Peter the straightforward answer that he wants.

Yeah. And then this kind of sets the stage for this major theme that Dr. Turner kind of helps us to unpack, which is, you know, the different ways that Jesus comes again. The different ways that Jesus comes.

Okay. Tell me all about these different ways. So Dr. Turner lays out three distinct ways to understand how Jesus comes in John 14:16.

Okay. First, you have the post-resurrection appearances. Okay.

Where Jesus physically appears to the disciples. And it's about comfort. It's about reassurance.

It's about solidifying their faith after all they've just been through. Okay. So that's one coming.

What else? What's the second one? Yeah. Well, the second coming that Dr. Turner talks about is through the Holy Spirit. Okay.

And so this is about Jesus' presence continuing within believers, not physically, but just as powerfully empowering them to carry on his mission in the world. So even though he's physically gone, he's still with them. Yeah.

In this very real way. Yeah. So that's two comings.

What's the third? The third one is the one that we typically think of, like the ultimate second coming. Yeah. At the end of time.

Right. Right. Yeah.

But what Dr. Turner really wants to emphasize is that it's not about one coming being more important than another. Right. Each one builds upon the last and shows us that God's presence in the world is this ever-growing, progressive reality.

That's a really cool way to look at it. Yeah. And it makes those verses where Jesus is talking about preparing rooms in the Father's house so much more interesting.

Yeah. John 14.23. Yeah. The verses that a lot of people use to describe heaven.

Right. And Dr. Turner, he suggests that these rooms could also refer to the abiding presence of God that we experienced through the Spirit, not just in the future, but here and now. So hold on.

Are you saying we might be experiencing those rooms right now? That's what he's suggesting. Wow. That changes everything.

Which makes me wonder: which resonates more with you? The idea of a physical dwelling in heaven or this all-encompassing spiritual presence that we can experience right now? That's a profound question. It is a profound question. And it's something that each of us has to wrestle with.

But before we go too far down that rabbit hole, let's move on to another fascinating piece of this puzzle. The Paraclete. The Paraclete.

Yeah. Most people, when they see that word paraclete, they translate it as comforter. But I'm guessing Dr. Turner has maybe a richer understanding.

He definitely does. So he points out that the word paraclete, paracletos, has a much broader meaning than just comforter. Yeah.

It also encompasses roles like advocate, counselor, helper. Okay. And so the Holy Spirit is someone who continues Jesus's work in this new and powerful way.

So it's like having a divine legal team, therapist, and life coach all rolled into one. It is. It's amazing.

It's a gift. And Dr. Turner emphasizes how the Holy Spirit does all sorts of things like testifying about Jesus, convicting the world of sin, and teaching us everything we need to know to live a truly Christ-like life. Teaching us everything.

Everything. That seems like a lot to ask. It does.

For the Holy Spirit. How does that even work? How does that teaching process even work? That's the million-dollar question. And as always, Dr. Turner brings some serious wisdom to the table.

And I think he cautions against taking the easy route, relying on gut feelings or thinking every random thought that pops into our head is a message from the Holy Spirit. So no more, this verse just spoke to my soul. Yeah.

Well, intuition can be helpful. Right. But Dr. Turner really stresses the importance of testing everything against Scripture.

He uses the word illumination to describe how the Spirit works. Okay. Illumination, what does that mean? Is it like the Spirit is highlighting certain passages for us? Well, he actually suggests two possibilities for how illumination works.

The first is that God opens our minds to grasp the deeper meaning of Scripture. Okay. Like Jesus did for the disciples on the road to Emmaus when he explained the prophecies about himself.

Oh, right. It's like those aha moments, like when a passage suddenly clicks, and you see it in a whole new light. So that's one.

What's the second possibility? The second possibility is even more interesting, I think. Okay. He proposes that the spirit might not be illuminating us so much as illuminating scripture itself.

Wait, what? How can you illuminate scripture? It's just text on a page. Right. But think of it this way.

The words on the page stay the same, but the Spirit empowers them, makes them come alive for us in a way that we couldn't achieve on our own. It's like the spirit acts as a conductor, allowing the power of God's word to flow into our hearts and minds. Wow.

Okay. That's a powerful image. Yeah.

But hold on. Dr. Turner throws in another kind of thought-provoking idea here. He suggests that the promise about the Spirit teaching all things might not apply to all believers throughout history.

Wait, really? So all that stuff about the Spirit guiding us, that's only for a select few. That doesn't seem fair. Well, Dr. Turner points out that Jesus was speaking directly to his disciples, the eleven who remained faithful.

And those disciples, along with their close companions, went on to become the authors of the New Testament. Ah, okay. So maybe the promise is specifically about the Spirit inspiring them to write Scripture, which then in turn teaches us all things.

That's one way to interpret it. Yeah. And it definitely emphasizes the importance of taking scripture seriously as the foundation for our faith.

You know, all this talk about the Spirit teaching us reminds me of another question. How do we reconcile this idea of the Spirit's guidance with the fact that there are so many different interpretations of the Bible out there? Oh, yeah. Like, if the Spirit's supposed to be teaching us, how come we all don't agree on what the Bible's saying? That's a great question.

And it really gets to the heart of how we approach the Bible, how we understand the role of the Holy Spirit. Yeah. And ultimately, how we live out our faith in the world.

And I think it's a big enough question that we should probably save it for part two of this deep dive. Agreed. Let's give everybody some time to process everything we've covered so far.

Yeah, we've covered a lot of ground. You know, the new commandment, the different ways Jesus comes, and the amazing role of the Holy Spirit as our teacher and guide. Right.

It's a lot to take in, but it's so worth the effort. Yeah, it is. So glad we could do this.

Me too. And we'll be back for part two. Okay, I feel like I need to take a deep breath after all of that.

Last time, we were starting to unpack this question of how the Holy Spirit teaches us, especially given that there are so many different interpretations of the Bible out there. Yeah, it's a tricky topic for sure. And, you know, Dr. Turner acknowledges that there will always be different interpretations, but he also emphasizes the importance of seeking unity amidst that diversity.

Okay. You know, it's about holding on to our convictions while also respecting the viewpoints of others. That sounds really difficult to balance, especially when you feel like someone's interpretation is just totally off base.

How do we even begin to approach those conversations? Well, Dr. Turner stresses the importance of humility and recognizing that we all bring our own, you know, baggage to the table, our own, you know, pre-understandings, our own experiences. Right. And it's about engaging in dialogue, not debate.

Okay. So instead of trying to win an argument, we should focus on understanding where the other person is coming from. So it's less about being right and more about understanding each other.

Exactly. And sometimes that means agreeing to disagree. Yeah.

But the goal is to do so respectfully. Yeah. Remembering that we're all, you know, fellow travelers on this journey of faith.

Yeah, that's a good reminder. But I still wrestle with this question of how to avoid falling into the trap of relativism. Right.

If everybody has their own interpretation, doesn't that mean truth is subjective? Yeah. Shouldn't there be some objective standards, some ultimate sorts of truth? That's where scripture comes in. Okay.

And Dr. Turner reminds us that while interpretations may differ, the text itself remains constant. Right. It's the anchor that keeps us from drifting into, you know, theological chaos.

So even with all the different perspectives out there, we can still trust that God is speaking to us through his word. Absolutely. But here's where things get even more interesting.

Okay. Dr. Turner cautions against taking a rigid, overly literal approach to Scripture. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical and cultural context in which each book was written.

So it's not just about reading the words on the page, but about understanding the world behind the words. Exactly. We need to consider things like the original audience, literary genre, and the author's overall purpose.

It's about seeking a holistic understanding of scripture. Okay. One that honors both the divine inspiration of the text and the human authors that God chose to use.

Okay. That makes sense. But man, sometimes diving into all these interpretive complexities can feel really overwhelming.

Oh, yeah. I get lost in the weeds sometimes. Any advice for navigating these deep theological waters? Well, Dr. Turner's advice is to approach scripture with an open mind and a humble heart.

Yeah. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Okay.

To wrestle with difficult passages and to seek out wise counsel from others who have, you know, been studying the Bible for a while. So basically, don't try to go it alone. Right.

It's a journey best shared with others. And remember, it's a journey, not a destination. There's always more to learn, more to discover in God's word.

Okay. That's encouraging. I have to admit, all this talk about the Spirit guiding us through Scripture and the challenges of interpretation makes me think about another question.

Okay. What about those promises about the Spirit teaching us all things? You know, Dr. Turner mentioned that this might not apply to all believers throughout history, but how do we know if it applies to us today? That's a great question. And it really gets to the heart of how we understand the Holy Spirit's role in our lives today.

Do we see the Spirit as someone who primarily inspired the authors of Scripture? Or is there a more direct, personal way that the Spirit guides and teaches us? Oh, that's getting into some deep theological territory. I think we might need to pause here and pick up this thread in the next part of our deep dive. Okay.

We don't want to rush through such an important question. Agreed. Let's give everyone a chance to ponder this idea and come back ready to explore the nuances of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives today.

Okay. So we're back and ready to kind of tackle this big question that we left hanging last time. How does the Holy Spirit teach us today? Is it mainly through Scripture, as we've been discussing? Or is there something more? Yeah.

It's a question that has fascinated theologians for centuries. And Dr. Turner doesn't shy away from the complexity. He acknowledges that some Christians believe in a more direct, personal revelation from the Holy Spirit.

You know, those moments where you just feel like God is speaking directly to your heart. Like, like you just know what God wants you to do in a certain situation. I've definitely felt that way before.

But I've also wondered, you know, is that just me projecting my own desires onto God? It's a valid concern. And Dr. Turner cautions against mistaking our own emotions or wishful thinking for the voice of God. He stresses the importance of testing those promptings against, you know, that foundation of Scripture and seeking wise counsel from others.

So it's about finding that balance between being open to the Spirit's leading, but also making sure we're not just making stuff up. Exactly. Think of it like this.

Scripture is the compass that points us in the right direction. Okay. And the Holy Spirit is the wind in our sails propelling us forward.

We need both to navigate this journey of faith. That's a, that's a great analogy. So how do we know, how do we know if we're actually hearing from the Holy Spirit? What are some practical ways to kind of discern God's voice from our own thoughts? That's where Dr. Turner offers some really helpful guidance.

He suggests paying attention to the fruit of the Spirit. You know, those qualities listed in Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. So if those qualities are present in our lives and in our decisions, then we can be more confident that we're on the right track.

Exactly. It's not just about feeling good or getting what we want. It's about aligning our lives with the character of God.

Right. Right. That makes sense.

So as we, as we kind of wrap up this deep dive into John 13.31 to 14.31, what are some, what are some key takeaways that you hope listeners will walk away with? I think the most important takeaway is that even though Jesus physically left this world, he never truly abandoned us. Right. He promised to send the Holy Spirit, who is just as present, just as powerful as Jesus was during his earthly ministry.

And the Holy Spirit continues to work in our lives today, guiding us, teaching us, and empowering us to live like Jesus. Exactly. And as we've seen, that teaching and guidance often come through scripture, but it can also come through personal prompting, through wise counsel from others, through the circumstances of our lives.

The key is to stay connected to God, to cultivate a listening heart, and to be willing to follow wherever he leads. I love that. Right.

So for everyone listening out there, what stood out to you the most from Dr. Turner's insights? What will you take with you from this deep dive? Maybe it's a new way of understanding Jesus is coming or a deeper appreciation for the role of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it's a renewed commitment to live out that radical love that Jesus commanded, or maybe you're just inspired to open your Bible with fresh eyes, with a more receptive heart. Whatever it is, don't let this conversation end here.

Talk about these ideas with your friends, your family, your small group. Share what resonated with you and see what insights emerge. And if you want to go even deeper, I highly recommend checking out the rest of Dr. Turner's lecture series.

It's an incredible resource that will enrich your understanding of the Gospel of John and deepen your relationship with Jesus. Thanks for joining us on this deep dive. And until next time, keep seeking, keep questioning, and keep growing in your faith.