

Farewell Discourse, Teaching about Sorrow and a Final Prayer (John 16:16–17:26)

Author: Dr. David Turner | Session: Session 18

Sponsored by Biblicalelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Keywords

Farewell Discourse, Holy Spirit, Perichoresis, Overcoming, World, Glory, Unity, Intercession, Sorrow

Abstract

This lecture by Dr. David Turner concludes the analysis of Jesus' Farewell Discourse in the Gospel of John, covering John 16:16–17:26. It examines Jesus' transition from teaching about future sorrow and persecution to offering comfort, peace, and his final prayer of intercession. Key theological themes are explored, including the ethical nature of 'the world,' the concept of divine and human 'glory,' and the profound, Triune-modeled love and unity intended for believers as their ultimate apologetic. Ultimately, Turner emphasizes that this deep unity is made possible only through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Outline

I. Introduction to the Farewell Discourse Conclusion (John 16:16–17:26)

A. Structural context of chapters 13–17

1. Framed by a preamble (John 13:1–30)
 - a. Jesus models true humility and service.
 - b. He performs the foot washing.
2. Discourse proper (John 13:31–16:33)
 - a. Jesus teaches about the coming Spirit.
 - b. He teaches about abiding in the vine.
 - c. He speaks realistically about facing persecution.
3. Postlude (John 17:1–26)
 - a. Jesus intercedes for his disciples.
 - b. He seals his relationship with them in a final prayer.

B. The transition in John 16:16

1. Jesus' statement: "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

2. Context of the uninterrupted teaching

- a. This is the first uninterrupted teaching since Judas (not Iscariot) asked about Jesus going public in John 14:22.

3. Location transition

- a. Follows Jesus' instruction to leave the upper room in John 14:31.

II. The Narrative Flow of John 16:16–33

A. Disciples' confusion and Jesus' clarification (John 16:17–28)

1. The disciples' reaction

- a. They whisper and shrug.
- b. They do not understand "a little while."

2. Jesus' perception of their confusion

- a. He perceives their desire to ask him.
- b. He clarifies his departure and return in John 16:19.

3. Plain declaration in John 16:28

- a. Jesus came from the Father and entered the world.
- b. Jesus is leaving the world and going back to the Father.

B. The disciples' reaction and Jesus' realistic warning (John 16:29–33)

1. The disciples' claim of understanding

- a. They claim they now understand plainly.
- b. They state he is not using figurative language (paroimeia).

2. Jesus' questioning of their confidence

- a. Jesus asks: "Do you really now believe?"

3. Realized eschatology of persecution in John 16:32

- a. Warning that the hour has come for them to be scattered.
- b. They will be scattered to their own homes.
- c. They will leave him alone.

4. Jesus' assurance

- a. He is not truly alone because the Father is with him.

C. The Climax of Peace and Victory in John 16:33

1. Core promise

- a. Disciples may have peace in Jesus despite facing trouble in the world.

2. Ultimate declaration

- a. "Take heart, I have overcome the world."

III. The Structure and Flow of the Intercessory Prayer (John 17)

- A. Communion of heavenly glory (John 17:1–5)
 - 1. Jesus prays directly for his own glorification.
 - 2. Purpose of glorification is to reciprocally glorify the Father.
- B. Intercession for immediate disciples (John 17:6–19)
 - 1. Jesus prays for those whom God gave him.
 - 2. These disciples are chosen out of the world.
- C. Intercession for future believers (John 17:20–26)
 - 1. Jesus prays for all who will believe.
 - 2. Belief will come through the testimony of the original disciples.

IV. In-Depth Theological Themes

- A. The Reality of Sorrow and Joy (John 16:20–22)
 - 1. Nature of grief
 - a. Grief at Jesus' departure is real and deep.
 - b. It is temporary.
 - 2. Transformation of sorrow
 - a. Sorrow will be transformed into lasting joy.
 - b. This joy will occur when they see Jesus again.
 - 3. Two-fold fulfillment of "seeing him again"
 - a. Physical appearances after the resurrection.
 - b. Ongoing, permanent relationship through the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- B. Persecution, Peace, and the Settled Heart (John 16:32–33)
 - 1. Analogy between Jesus and disciples
 - a. Jesus is left alone but has the Father.
 - b. Scattered disciples will feel alone but have Jesus through the Spirit.
 - 2. Biblical definition of peace
 - a. Not the absence of conflict, turmoil, or difficulty.
 - b. A settled heart fixed on God.
 - c. Remaining steady in the midst of worldly trouble (referencing John 14:1, 14:27).
- C. The Concept of Overcoming (Nikao)
 - 1. Etymology
 - a. Derived from the Greek verb nikao.

- b. Derived from the noun nike (victory).

2. Sharing Christ's victory

- a. Every believer overcomes the world through faith (1 John 5:1–5).

- b. Rejects the elite "super Christian" or "Green Beret" theology.

3. Apocalypse connection

- a. Revelation 5:5 depicts the Lion of Judah who has triumphed (nikao).

- b. The seven letters to the churches in Revelation promise rewards to the "overcomer."

D. The Biblical-Theological Definition of "the World" (Cosmos)

1. Spatial or material entity

- a. Represents the planet or physical universe.

2. Ethical entity (primary focus in John)

- a. Represents an ethical system hostile to God and the Spirit (John 14:17, 15:18–19).

3. Domain and authority of the devil

- a. Satan is the "ruler" or "prince" of this world (John 12:31, 16:11, 17:15).

- b. The whole world lies under the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19).

4. Object of God's redemptive love

- a. Despite hostility, the world is loved by God (John 3:16).

- b. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

- c. He is the light and savior of the world (John 6:51, 8:12, 12:46–47).

E. The Theology of "Glory" in John

1. Biblical background

- a. Exodus 33–34: Moses seeks to understand God's character.

- b. Mobile wilderness Tabernacle: Manifests God's presence.

2. Definition of glory

- a. The revealed excellence of God's moral being.

- b. The aggregate of his divine attributes.

3. Way to glorify God

- a. Acknowledging and standing in awe of this excellence.

- b. Expressed through thoughts, words, and deeds.

4. Jesus as the ultimate revelator

- a. The incarnate Word who makes God's glory known (John 1:14).

- b. He is the exegesis of God (John 1:18).

5. Christ's reciprocal glorification (John 17:1–5)

- a. Jesus glorified the Father by completing his earthly work (John 17:4).
 - b. He asks for the restoration of his pre-existent heavenly glory (John 17:5).
- 6. Christocentric role of the Holy Spirit (John 16:14)
 - a. The Advocate (parakletos) does not speak of himself.
 - b. The Spirit glorifies Jesus by revealing him to the disciples.
- 7. The disciples' role in glorifying God
 - a. Glorifying the Father by bearing abundant fruit (John 15:8).

V. The Disciples' Relationship to the World (John 17 Prepositions)

- A. Grammatical and relational paradox of prepositions
 - 1. Chosen "out of" the world (John 17:6).
 - 2. Not "of" the world (John 17:14, 17:16).
 - 3. Still "in" the world (John 17:11).
 - 4. Sent "into" the world (John 17:18).
- B. The dual dangers of imbalance
 - 1. Being so "heavenly-minded" that we are no "earthly good" (monastic withdrawal or inability to relate).
 - 2. Being so "earthly-minded" that we are no "heavenly good" (conforming to worldly values).

VI. Love and Oneness as the Ultimate Apologetic

- A. The bookends of the Farewell Discourse
 - 1. Exhortation bookend (John 13:34–35)
 - a. Jesus' new commandment to love one another.
 - b. This love enables the world to recognize them as disciples.
 - 2. Intercessory prayer bookend (John 17:21)
 - a. Jesus prays for perfect unity among his followers.
 - b. This unity enables the world to believe.
- B. The Trinitarian Model of Love and Unity
 - 1. Basis of oneness
 - a. Oneness is modeled on the relationship between the Father and the Son.
 - b. It is not based on simple shared secular causes or hobbies.
 - 2. Theological concept of Perichoresis
 - a. Mutual indwelling and shared life within the Trinity.
 - b. Persons of the Trinity do not operate in distinction from one another.

3. Human modeling of the Triune God

- a. Human beings were created in the image of God.
- b. Modeling is appropriate for finite image bearers.

C. Conclusion

1. Power of relationships

- a. Loving interrelationships serve as the church's ultimate defense.
- b. Profound unity serves as the ultimate outreach to a hostile world.

2. Achievement of the standard

- a. Made possible only through the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- b. Requires abiding deeply in the vine.