

## John (Part 22)

John 14:7-15:6 Promise of the Holy Spirit to lead us to Truth

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The beginning of John 14 is given in such a way to help us to understand that the disciples' whole world was just about ready to cave in. They did not really understand what Christ was saying, but yet, what He was saying was having a certain amount of impact on them. They were saddened by what they were beginning to understand.

That is why chapter 14 begins the way that it does:

**John 14:1** "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."

He wanted to encourage them. Even though He was talking about going away, and He was talking very clearly about His death, eventually all are going to be able to follow where He is going. In verse 2, He assures them that there is enough room in God's Kingdom, in God's family, that all of them will be able to be a part of it, and it is going to be a permanent residence for them.

In verse 4 is one of His more famous statements:

**John 14:4** "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Thomas did not fully grasp that, so He asked Him to show him the way, and Jesus said:

**John 14:6** "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

I was thinking about "the way" in this regard: you come into a strange town, and you ask someone for directions to a location. You are unfamiliar with the town, you know vaguely where you want to go, because you have the address, but you do not have a map, and you do not know exactly where the street and the number on the street is. So you ask somebody on the street, "Can you tell me where this place is?" And they say, "Oh, yes, I know exactly where it is, I have lived around here for a long time." They proceed to tell you to go down the street three blocks, and then turn left, go five more blocks, then turn right.

Then he says, "On the right-hand side, you will see a church. Go right past that church, and go to the next block, and you will see a store. Turn right at that store, and then after you turn right, there is another landmark, and you go three more blocks past that, and you turn left. Now, when you turn left, you will see a couple more familiar landmarks, and you are almost there now. When you get to a certain tree, hang another left, and you will be right there."

By that time, you go about halfway there, and your head is spinning because you cannot even remember.

That is what Thomas was doing here: "We don't know the way, where are we going? How do we get there?"

With Christ, it is like this: how much easier would it be, in that strange town, where you know the destination, you know where you want to go, but you do not know exactly how to get there, if He said, "Come on, I'll take you there." Would that not be much easier?

That is what Christ said, "I am the way." That is what He is promising: not only that He will give directions, but He will also go along with us, in that we have an example in His life of how to get there. It is so clear. *He is the way*. If we want to get to the destination, all we have to do is do what He did. That sounds so easy: all we have to do is do what He did. Easy to say, but very difficult to do.

It illustrates what He meant: "I am the way, I will show you how to get there." So He takes us in hand, and we follow the way that He goes. When we get to the destination, He is right there with us as well.

In verse 6, He says, "the truth." Christ not only told us truth, but He embodies truth. There is a big difference between merely being told truth and embodying it. He *is* truth, there is no other way that it can be put. Someone can tell you truth and it has some impact on you, but if you know that they *are* truth, and they live it, they embody it, it means a great deal more to you. The kind of life that He lived is the kind of life that God wants us to live.

**John 14:7-11** "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the

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Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."

This is perhaps one of the more astounding things that could be told to a Greek. At the very beginning of this series, I told you that John was written primarily for a Greek-speaking audience. Because of their traditions and background, they had certain conceptions of God. To them, God was unreachable, God was invisible.

Remember all of the "emanations" that I told you about. God was detached from His creation, He did not involve Himself in the operation of it. In fact, according to their ideas, the earth was created by one of these emanations from God that was so distant from God, that it was actually created by an emanation that was antagonistic to God. If you read any of their mythology, you get the idea of what I am talking about. The Greeks pictured their gods as just kind of, at the most, "playing around with" human beings.

Here is Jesus saying that to look at Him is to look at God. To be with Him is to be in the presence of God. As you saw Christ live out His life, that is the way that God, were He to come to the earth, would live His life. That is very significant, and it is an expansion on "I am the way, I am truth, I am the life." It is an expansion on that.

When Philip asked his question, "If you show us the Father, it will be sufficient," it is very likely that what he was thinking about was Moses asking God to reveal Himself. The story is in Exodus 33, where God says, "I will, I will show you, but you shall not look on My face." What God did at that time was very significant: He preached a sermon to Moses.

In Exodus 33 and 34, He preached Moses a sermon on His name. What is His name? What is the purpose of His name? His name describes what He is. His name describes what He does. His name tells us what He will do, in the way of promises. He has a lot of names, so He gave Moses a sermon on eight or nine of His names. He was revealing to Moses not just what He *looked* like, but more, what He *was* like.

When you look at it from that point of view, Philip's question was not so dumb. "Show us the Father, like Moses did. Show us the Father, and that will be sufficient. Then we'll really understand."

Jesus did not fully appreciate Philip's question, because His response is kind of a mild rebuke in which He reminded Him about certain things.

What do we see Jesus doing in His life? Remember, He revealed the Father. There are many, many things that we could go in to, but I want to touch on what I would call the common and the ordinary, because that is what we deal with, day in and day out. What do we deal with? We deal with alarm clocks waking us up in the morning, we deal with getting up and using the bathroom, eating our breakfast, going out in the car, going off to work. All day long, we deal with people at work. We either supervise employees, or we are under supervision ourselves. We deal with making sales, we deal with whatever your work has to do with.

That is what Christ did. God came in the flesh, and He dealt with life on the same level that we do. He revealed how God would live, if God came to the earth and lived as a man. So what do we see? We see Christ being born into an ordinary family. Here is God, being born into an ordinary family. He was the oldest son.

We see Him growing up, with brothers and sisters, and undoubtedly having the experience of dealing with brothers and sisters, all of those sibling rivalries that take place within the family. Although they are not revealed in the Bible, we see little glimpses of it. In John 7 when they were all grown up, His brothers did not believe on Him. They did not appreciate who He was.

We see Jesus growing up under a father, who undoubtedly loved Him very much, and taught Him what? A trade. They were the contractors within the village. As a tradesman, Jesus had to deal with customers. Some customers can be cranky. Some customers just cannot be satisfied. Some customers do not pay their bills. So He had to undoubtedly do the kinds of things that a contractor would do, in dealing with people. He undoubtedly had employees.

After a while, His father died, so Christ was then left with the responsibility, as the oldest son, of taking care of a widowed mother, and as the oldest son, He undoubtedly inherited the business. He was responsible to a great deal for the rearing of His younger brothers and sisters, and maybe putting them into the business as well, and training them.

So He dealt with employees, as well as other businessmen that He had to buy materials from, and with customers, all different kinds of customers.

We see Him dealing with life on the same terms as God demands you and I deal with

life. "You have seen Me, you have seen the Father."

How else do we see Him? As an adult, we see Him dealing with the temptations of life, the same kinds of temptations that we face, only much more intensified because of whom He was. He was the Son of God, the Savior of the world, Immanuel. Because of those things, Satan's attempts to overthrow Him, to seduce Him, to deceive Him, were intensified to a much greater degree than we have come upon us.

We see Him meeting the temptations of life, and we see Him struggling to overcome. In Hebrews 5, He cries out to God with strong crying and tears and supplications. We see Him dealing with those things.

We see Him getting up early in the morning and praying, long before dawn. We see Him dealing with people late into the night, putting in long hours in serving them and in serving the Father within the work that God gave Him to do.

Because of that, we know that we have an Elder Brother, we have a Savior who is accustomed to being on the front lines. He is not just a general who stands at the back and points, saying, "That's the way, fellows! Go to it!" He was out there struggling as well.

We see Him in other ways, too, other ways that you and I have to deal with. We see Him offering, giving love, and having it rejected. We see Him in pain, trying to help people, and having them misunderstand. Not even getting what He says, outright rejecting what He gave to them. We will see that in John 15, He had a few comments about that. Outright rejecting what He had to give them, so we Him having His love rejected.

You know, because of who He was and what He was, that He cared more intensely than anybody who has ever lived. If you ever feel as though you have been rejected, as though you have been misunderstood and not appreciated, you have a little bit of a glimpse of what He had to go through, as well.

Finally, of course, we see God sacrificing Himself. That is something that a Greek could never come to grips with.

You and I have ideas about leadership, ideas about God. It is very easy, because of the things that we have been taught, to think about a God who condemns. That is modern Protestantism. "Oh, that God of the Old Testament! Boy, He just wiped people out, left and right. He didn't like people, and He didn't love them at all! He was a mean and bitter

God.” It is easy for us to think of God in those terms, because it fits human nature.

But to think about a God who cares so intensely that He lays down His life? He does not wipe us out, but He gives everything that He possibly can, in order to open up the way into the kind of life that He lives.

That is what you see—“If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.” That is the way our God is. Though He has the power to do whatever He wants, this is the way that He has chosen to live. It is a way of love.

It is also good to notice that He constantly deferred to the Father. This is just another example in which He gives credit to the Father for what he was able to accomplish.

What we see in this explanation, from verses 7 to 11, is that Jesus Christ lived in perfect union with the Father in every aspect of life. “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.” They were a mirror image, in terms of the way that they lived.

**John 14:12-14** “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

In verse 12, when He says “greater works,” my Bible has the word *works* in italics, which means that it was inserted. Several different references that I looked into say that what is implied is the word *things*, rather than the word *works*. Maybe that is not important, but certainly *works* is implied. But it is much broader than we would think in terms of works, greater things.

The thing that has to be answered is, greater in what respect? Certainly, the works that His disciples, including us, would do, and maybe are doing, are not greater in kind. For instance, if Peter resurrected someone, it was not greater than the resurrection of Christ. It did not exceed it in kind. They were both resurrections.

What He means is, greater in its sphere of influence. This is the way that Mr. Armstrong applied it, as well. That is, Christ only managed to preach in the area of Palestine: in Samaria and in Judea. He may have gone to other places, but there is no record of Him preaching the Gospel. There is certainly no record of Him healing in other places. He Himself said in Matthew 10, that He was sent “not but to the lost sheep of the house of

Israel,” and that is where He was going to send His disciples, as well.

However, when He went back to the Father and sent the Spirit, His sphere of influence through the disciples became much greater. They proceeded to begin to spread His sphere of influence out over the entire earth.

It has reached its greatest extent in this period in the church’s history. We know that the apostles got to many areas. Legends and history tell us that they got over into India, to Central Europe, over to Spain, up into England. But in this era, it has been spread all around the world, more powerfully than ever.

So Christ’s sphere of influence is now far greater, it is worldwide. There are people being converted in almost all of the nations of the world. So the sphere of influence is what He is talking about, “the greater things.”

Another aspect is because He would no longer be encumbered by the flesh. As a human being, He was limited to the one place where He was at any given time. His sphere of influence could only be to those who could hear His voice at that time.

When He goes back to the Father, He could influence multiple thousands, tens of thousands of people by His Spirit. In turn, they would be witnessing for Christ wherever they happened to be. He would no longer be encumbered by the flesh, and thus His “greater things” could then be done.

What He intended was that the things that He would be doing would be carried on under much broader conditions. It would not be limited to the space and time in which He Himself was in.

In verse 14, He says, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

If we took that exactly the way it is stated, without it being modified by other portions of the Bible, we could ask God to strike someone dead and they would fall over dead. With the way human nature is, there would not be very many people alive. The earth would be full of all kind of “goodies” that God would be constantly feeding our nature.

What is implied is that a person who was really in harmony with Christ would be asking in prayer the same kinds of things that Christ Himself would ask in prayer. When we pray, the thing that we have to ask ourselves is: is this the kind of thing that Christ would ask for? What we of course have to do is to look in God’s Word for the kinds of things that Christ would ask for, and actually, the Bible is full of them. The Psalms are just filled

with things that Christ would ask for, either for Himself or for others. There is a very broad number of things that are there, very specific things that we can ask for.

Basically, God will respond in things that are asked selflessly, things that are real needs of our own. Those things He will certainly respond to. Matthew 5 and 6 show that very clearly. What we have need of, God already knows. He will supply those things. So it is not selfish to ask God for things that we do need. In the Lord's Prayer, it makes it very clear that we can ask for those things.

But generally, it is going to be those kinds of things that Christ Himself would ask for. We use the term, "My name," as indicating it being asked in Christ's authority. That is not wrong, but I think that in this context, it more closely suits what I just told you, that whatever we ask that Christ would also ask for, God will grant.

He may not grant it exactly when we want it, or when we think someone else needs it. If we pray selflessly for something that someone else needs, God will grant it, but He will still grant it when He thinks it is good to be granted. He will not grant it simply because we have asked for it, that is another modifier. God has to consider the well-being of everyone concerned in our request.

**John 14:15-18** "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

Verse 15 was one of the first ones that I taught my children to remember. It seems like it was way back in the dark ages, but I did think it was necessary to put that in their minds. "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

That is very logical. If you really love someone, you will do for them what is pleasing to them. That is what He is asking. Now, what pleases Him? It is obedience. He says, "If you really love Me, that's going to show that you do." If you really love someone, you will do for them what is pleasing to them. That is all He is asking.

He says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever."

Verse 15 indicates something. Love, in the biblical sense, is a moral and spiritual act.

Feeling and sentiment *may* be a part of it, but it is not necessary. I mean, a pleasing sentiment, a pleasing emotion. The Bible presents the love of God as being a moral act. It is something that one does for the benefit of someone else. It is a moral act, rather than a feeling.

It may have feeling connected to it, but it does not have to have a pleasant feeling connected to it. A proof of that is that Christ tells us that we have to love our enemies. If a person is your enemy, the chances are very great that you do not feel too kindly towards that person. If you had to depend upon your feelings for something good to take place, it is very likely that the good thing would never take place, because your feelings would inhibit you from doing something good for them. Therefore, that person would ever remain your enemy, until you got over your feeling.

The love of God is a moral act that we are able to do even for someone we do not feel like doing it for. But we do it, because God says that it is right to do. Not because our feelings are dictating to us. Actually, we overcome the feeling of antagonism, the feeling of displeasure, the feeling of unkindness, and we do what has to be done.

Sometimes, the feeling that you have is not a feeling of unkindness or anger, but rather, it is another kind of feeling. Here, I am talking about disciplining your child. You know the child has done something wrong. At first, you may have been irritated, but then you begin to think, "If I discipline this child, if I give this child a spanking, I'm going to feel terrible!" Here is this little child, and if I spank this child, it is not going to love me.

God says, let not your soul spare for its crying. If you do not spank the child, then you really do not love your child—and yet, you feel like an ogre. You feel like a really bad guy. Here you are, you are going to inflict pain on the child. But God says, if you love them, you will overcome that feeling of pity for the child and spank them anyway.

So the feeling is not always a bad feeling, but feelings inhibit us from doing the loving thing from time to time. Of course, it is wrong to spank just out of mere irritation, because then your emotion is driving you in the wrong direction.

In verse 16, the word translated "Helper" in the King James is translated "Comforter." It is from the Greek *parakletos*. It is not really able to be translated into one word. "Helper" is not a bad word, not a bad translation. When the King James was translated, the word *comfort* meant something other than what it does today. "Comfort" today means "to sympathize with." But *comfort*, back in the 1600's, meant to give strength to, to give encouragement to, to give bravery to. The root, *fort*, comes from the Latin, which means *brave*—*fortis*. So *comfort* means "to give strength." But today, it means to give

encouragement, or to sympathize with.

The word *parakletos* translates into the English as “one who comes alongside.” It is as if the translators have difficulty getting one word. The idea is, one who comes alongside to help.

In what way? It was used in the sense of a lawyer, who came alongside you into court, to help you fight your case, to defend you. It was used in the sense of someone who was giving evidence in your behalf. In this case, it is not your lawyer, but a witness in your behalf. It was also used in Greek armies, and the Romans also picked it up later: they had orators who would come before a battle and give a real strong message of encouragement. That was the *parakletos*. He was coming alongside the troops to give them encouragement just before they went into the battle.

In the book of Deuteronomy, there are a couple of war sermons, messages that were given just before the Israelites went into battle, encouraging them by saying that God was going to be with them.

That is what the *parakletos* does. It is someone who comes alongside to give help. It could give guidance, it could give encouragement. It could give sympathy. It could give inspiration. It could recall to our memory. But whatever we need, that is what God’s Holy Spirit is there for. It does not make decisions for us, but will lead us toward the right decision, by reminding us, helping us, encouraging us, to remember something—a scripture, a truth, an example or illustration—that might be needful for that time.

The overall purpose of the Comforter is to give us the help that we need to cope with life. Another way of putting it would be, to cope with the demands of being a Christian in this world.

Christ said that this Spirit of truth, that the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him—He is saying that the Spirit is unintelligible and unrecognizable to them because faith is involved with the Holy Spirit.

Another way of putting it would be this: it says, “it neither sees Him nor knows Him.” But the world is not fitted to be able to see it or to know it. By see it does not mean literally with the eyes, it means to grasp, to understand.

It is similar to this: a musician can hear a piece of music, and they see a lot more in it than somebody who is unschooled in music. I can listen to music, and I do not hear any flaws at all. But somebody else could listen to the music, and they hear things that I do

not hear, because they have been trained to perceive those things.

It is the same way with an artist. You and I could look at a picture, and say, "Wow, isn't that nice!" Somebody else looks at it, and they see thousands of flaws.

Even though I have not been welding since 1966, my eyes are drawn like a magnet to welds. Every once in a while, I look at them and say, "Boy, the guy must have been drunk when he did that!" You can look at a weld, and you may not see a thing. But since I worked at it for so long, my eyes are trained to pick up things that somebody who is untrained cannot even begin to see.

I look at a flower garden and I see beauty. I see color. A botanist looks at the flower garden, and he sees the beauty and the color, but he also sees each one of the plants as well, and what they are, and he can identify them.

That is what Christ is talking about here. In order for somebody to recognize the Spirit of God, they have to have been trained to be able to see it, understand it, grasp it, see the evidence of its existence—know that it is working in someone. The world tries to live without God, so they do not recognize the Spirit of God. They would not recognize it if it hit them in the face.

That is what He means by that. Faith is involved.

He says, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." He is talking about His resurrection. Remember, this is one long discourse here, and He is still trying to encourage them and instruct them all at the same time, regarding the outcome or the effect of what He is going to go through.

What He is about to go through is going to be traumatic for them, as well, because they put their hopes, and dreams, and trust in Him, and they are going to very shortly discover that they had the wrong idea about a lot of things. When they finally discover that they had the wrong idea about a lot of things, or were reaching the wrong conclusions, perceiving things in a material way, in a secular way, in a worldly way—they are going to wonder, "Which direction should I go in?"

You know the story. They all scattered. Peter said, "I go fishing. It's all over." So off we go, it was a nice 3 ½ years, but where do we go from there?

But He says, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you again." He meant not only that He was going to be resurrected, but also implied in that, is that I will *never* leave you.

He is going to go on to that in just a little bit, to expand upon it.

There is a great deal of encouragement in that, because we have to understand the reality of God. If He lives in us, He has never left us, once He is there. So He is available to help.

**John 14:19-24** “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”

You see that the resurrection is at the foreground of His thoughts. In verse 20, He is showing that the resurrection would be a proof about what He had told them about the Father being in Him, and He in the Father. The resurrection would prove that the Father loved Him enough to make Him alive again.

Verse 21 is a reminder, going back to verse 15, that love and obedience are shown to be inseparable. The reason is that obedience proves that love exists. Words are cheap. There are people who may tell you that they love you, and then constantly do things to irritate, anger, and hurt you, that you cannot interpret as anything except, at the very least, immaturity, but it might even be hatred. I know that you understand that if they really loved you, they would not treat you like that. That is what He is saying here.

In verse 22, Judas (not Iscariot) is the same as the Thaddaeus of Matthew 10 and Mark 3, called by different names.

How would Jesus manifest Himself? Verses 23 and 24 are the answer to that question. The answer is, obviously, that He would do it spiritually. Certainly, He was going to be resurrected, there is no doubt about that. But He also is going to go back to the Father. His manifestation of Himself is going to be not just a one-time thing, but something that would last as long as these men were alive. And it applies to you and me, as well.

So the manifestation has to be through God's Holy Spirit. Does not Paul say in Romans 8 that the Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God, the sons of God? It is the Spirit of God that spiritually witnesses to us that we are the sons of God. It works on our mind, it brings things to our mind, it teaches us things about Christ. It makes us sensitive to God, it makes us sensitive to His Word, it makes us sensitive to His Holy Spirit. It educates us about God and His purpose. So His revelation would be a continuous process that would continue all the way through the person's life.

Directly tied to this is obedience. Because the person loves God, he obeys God, and because he loves and obeys God, God continues to reveal to the person that He is living within him. That is part of His answer: making the person sensitive to God, so that God is a reality.

Look at verse 23 in that light, because here is the answer to Judas' question: "If anyone loves Me, He will obey Me, He will keep My word, He will do the things that please Me. And My Father will love him," which means that the Father will do for us the things that please us. "We will come to him and make Our home with him." They will be living in us.

**John 14:24** "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."

The world is insensitive to God, and God is not a reality, because they do not obey. You get into a cycle: as you obey God (and remember, God initiates the action by calling us), He brings us into a closer relationship with Him, and makes us more and more sensitive. He gives us understanding, and reveals Himself to us further and further.

You might want to read Isaiah 59:1-2, where Isaiah wrote that it is sin that separates us from God. It is another verse to show that fellowship with God, and the revelation of God, are dependent upon love, and love is dependent upon obedience.

The key for you and me is learning to yield to God, because that is the one thing in our lives that we have not done. We just kind of went the way society bent us, twisted us, pushed us, and made us conform. God's calling has revealed the true God to us for the purpose of getting our lives in conformity with His life. As we obey Him, the opposite thing begins to take place. As we disobey, we drift further and further away.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed, He put them out of His presence. It is just a little illustration that shows what happens when we disobey: we are put out of the presence of God. As we obey, yield to Him, we are brought closer, until eventually we are like the

Father and like the Son. And then what will we be? We will be one with Him. We will be so close that eventually maybe it can be said that “You look at him, and you see the Father.” We will be “the spitting image,” just the way Christ was.

**John 14:25-31** “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.”

Verses 25 and 26 are a key to understanding what God’s Holy Spirit does for us. Jesus mentions two basic functions. This is the way that it leads, this is the way it helps. “It will teach you all things, and bring to remembrance all things that I said to you.” So God’s Holy Spirit leads us to recognize truth. Then when truth is needed, it reminds us. It brings it to mind.

But it does not make the decision for us. It does not clear the way, it does not remove the obstacles from our path. It does not overcome them for us. In fact, without the Holy Spirit, we may not even recognize a lot of problems—it even shows us what the problems are. That comes with recognizing truth. It is not until we recognize truth that we see a lot of problems that we did not think that we had before.

The Holy Spirit also reveals to us what human nature is like. In so doing, it tells us the truth about ourselves, as well. The key things are: it leads us into truth, and brings things to remembrance, but it does not decide for us.

This leads to other things. Because it will teach us all things, it means that the Christian is always a learner. It never ends, no matter how old we are in the faith. There is always more to learn, because we are always growing towards the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and I do not believe that any of us will ever reach it in this life. Maybe we will in our attitude, but for actually having the mind of Christ, we will not reach it. So we are always going to be led into more truth. It is a never-ending process. The

disciple of Christ is always a learner.

We have to be constantly seeking, deeper and deeper, into the truth of God, because we must have truth. We must be able to recognize it. We are defenseless without it, in a spiritual way. We have nothing to fight with. We are completely at Satan's mercy without truth, and he can just whipsaw us in any direction. We have got to have truth! The truth, as it pertains to the purpose of God—to life.

I will define that a little bit further. It is not so much that we need to be constantly reminded about truth, in the sense of a "bare fact," but rather, its application to life. For example, we could know the truth about the Sabbath—but so what? It does not become meaningful until we begin to apply it. What God's Holy Spirit does is not only reveal to us the bare fact, but rather, its application to *you*.

The commandment says, "You shall not steal." That is a truth. But how does it apply to you in your particular situation? On your job, in your marriage, in your life? It is the practical application that God is concerned about, not just the bare facts.

The Bible is filled with truth, but it has to be applied. Each person has to see the application in specific situations in his life. That is where God's Holy Spirit comes alongside to help. It will teach you, lead you, into all truth, and it will bring it to your remembrance.

A lot of this takes place in sermons and Bible studies. The minister inadvertently hits upon things that might apply directly to you, and God's Holy Spirit says, "Hey, this applies to me! Dummy, this is for you! Get it!"

In verse 27, it says, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you." I have been talking about that in the Peace Offerings. The peace that the world gives is a transitory euphoria or tranquility that almost completely has connections to things that are material. We are tranquil because we either receive something material, or have the expectation of something material, or because we are in a circumstance that is tranquil for the moment.

The kind of peace that Christ is talking about is a peace that a person can have regardless of circumstances.

You are probably aware of the Hebrew word *shalom*. It is translated into the English word *peace*. It does not really translate into the English word *peace*. That is simply the English word that seems to come closest to what the word *shalom* means. It is

somewhat like the Greek word *parakletos*. It is difficult to translate into the English in one word. The word *shalom* means “that which is best for you under any circumstance.” When you say to a person “shalom,” you are saying to that person, “I wish the best for you, in whatever circumstance you happen to be in.”

Is it always good that we have tranquility? God obviously does not believe that is the best thing for us. He certainly did not give His Son a tranquil life, and Christ lived the best kind of life that a person could possibly live. Yet His life was filled with problems. Now God must think that problems are good. Is it possible to have peace in the midst of problems?

Yes, it is. Because problems present us with things that give opportunity for growth, opportunity for experience that is going to produce character, give opportunities for experience that will produce maturity, will produce wisdom. We need to have trouble! But can we go through trouble with the secure feeling that Somebody is watching over you? That Somebody is with you, that Somebody is making sure that you are not getting in over your head? That Somebody is going to make sure that this thing works out right, is going to give you the right kind of advice at just the right time? That is going to come to your rescue, to give you whatever strength you need as you yield to Him? That is the kind of peace that He is talking about.

It is not the kind of peace that comes from just being in a situation where there are no problems. It is the kind of peace that comes or is produced by, how can I put it, “winning.” It is the kind of peace that you feel after you have done something well. That feels good! But you would not have that good feeling unless you had done it well, whether it is win a game, do something on the job well, design something well, or overcome a problem that you have had in your character, in the way that you think, the way that you do things—that is the kind of peace that He is talking about.

It is the kind of peace that God expressed after the six days of creation. He looked on all that He had done, and He was pleased. He had a sense of well-being.

That is what Christ is talking about. He is talking about the Holy Spirit, about how the Holy Spirit is going to help. He is talking about this One who is going to come alongside, and what is it going to do? It is going to help you in your difficulty. Not to make the difficulty disappear, but It is One that is going to come with you and be an aid for you within the difficulty. That is going to produce something: peace. That which is for your highest good.

If we are going to grow, we have to have problems. So this peace is the kind of peace

that comes from conquering the problems of life.

**John 14:28** “You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.”

He is saying that you would rejoice, because you would understand that I am going to be at the very source of power. In other words, He would run His work, not as a human being, but He would be at the very seat and source of power, back with the Father.

The next section is interesting:

**John 14:29-30** “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe [that is, the events of the crucifixion and resurrection]. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming [that is Satan], and he has nothing in Me.”

What does it mean, “he has nothing in Me”? It means that Satan had no claim on Him. Christ had never been Satan’s servant. He had never been submissive to Satan. He had never been Satan’s slave. Therefore, Satan had no claim on Him, because He had never sinned. There was nothing there that Satan could say, “There is a bit of me in there!” There is nothing there, because Christ had never sinned.

Another way of putting it is: Christ was not of the world. There was nothing in Him that was in conformity to the system that Satan had established on earth, because He had not conformed to it. So there was no claim there within Him that Satan could make on Him.

**John 14:31** “But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do.”

It is another reaffirmation of His spiritual determination to lay down His life.

And then He says, and I hate to say it is not translated right, because it is, but it gives the wrong impression:

**John 14:31** “Arise, let us go from here.”

It sounds like they are sitting in that room where they had the Passover meal. He is talking to these fellows, and He said, "Let us get up and leave." That is not what He said, even though the Greek can literally be translated that way. Let us get the context: "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming."

Here it comes, the advancing enemy! And there is their general, right out in front of them! The army is coming toward Him, and when He said, "Arise, let us go from here," what He literally said was, "Let us go to meet the advancing enemy."

He did not mean to get up and leave the room. He said, "I'm going to stand up, and I'm going to fight him, tooth and toenail. I'm going to overcome him, one more time, because he's going to try to get something on Me. He's trying to get something on Me that he can claim. I'm going to go out and do battle with him one more time."

Actually, it was a challenge to Satan, to do the best that he could to break Christ's will. Of course, he did not.

It is very likely that the next chapter and the next chapter also took place in that same room where they had the Passover. But that verse gives you the impression, the way it is translated, that they got up and walked out of the room. No, it means, "Let us go meet the advancing enemy."

**John 15:1** "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."

This is quite significant, and I think that we frequently miss the point of what He was saying here. There is no doubt that He was using a metaphor that all of us can be somewhat familiar with. Certainly, those people, because of their more agricultural lifestyle, would have been a great deal more familiar with it than most of us who have grown up in a city. But He is talking about something that is more far-reaching than just a little farming metaphor.

When I began this series of studies, I went into the word *alethinos* in the Greek. That is the word that is translated here *true*. I told you that the word is more closely equivalent to our English words *real* or *genuine*. He says, "I am the real vine," or "I am the genuine vine." The word *true* is not wrong, but it does not connote the meaning, as clearly as the word *real* or *genuine*. I like the word *real* a little bit better, because it fits better.

I am going to make a connection between the vine in John 15 and Isaiah 5:

**Isaiah 5:1-7** Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; and break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it." For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.

In many portions of the Bible, you will see Israel compared to a vine. They are the Lord's vine. When you go back to Isaiah 5, you can see what He is talking about. God chose a very choice land: the land of Palestine, the land of Canaan. He dug it up, and He cleared out its stones. He built a tower in it, and He planted a choice vine in it. That vine, of course, was the children of Israel.

We find in the course of history, that rather than bringing forth the kind of fruit that He wanted from it, instead, it brought forth wild fruit, even though He did everything possible. He pruned it, He fertilized it, He dug about it, cultivated it. He did everything He could possibly could, but instead of bringing forth the kind of fruit that He expected, it brought forth bad fruit. In fact, we find that every place Israel is compared to a vine in the Old Testament, it is in a state of degeneration.

With that in mind, it begins to give a little bit more indication of what Jesus was getting at when He said, "I am the real vine. I am the true one. I am the genuine vine."

**Jeremiah 2:21** Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?

Do you recall Mr. Armstrong in *Mystery of the Ages* showed that Israel's lineage from Noah was perfect? They were uncontaminated, in that sense, by contact with anyone else. It was a choice vine. Even while they were in Egypt, God made sure that they were kept separate from the Egyptians. He put them into the land of Goshen. The Egyptians even had ideas, beliefs, customs about anybody who was a shepherd, who kept cows and things like that—they kept themselves separate from them. So in that sense, they were a people uncontaminated, they were a choice vine, and He brought them into their land. But now He shows in Jeremiah that they have degenerated.

**Ezekiel 15:2-6** “Son of man, how is the wood of the vine better than any other wood, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest? Is wood taken from it to make any object? Or can men make a peg from it to hang any vessel on? Instead, it is thrown into the fire for fuel; the fire devours both ends of it, and its middle is burned. Is it useful for any work? Indeed, when it was whole, no object could be made from it. How much less will it be useful for any work when the fire has devoured it, and it is burned? Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem.’ ”

We could go on and on with that metaphor, and show you that in every place, God shows Israel to be a vine that is degenerate.

The first thing that you want to understand at the beginning of John 15 is that He is not just drawing an interesting illustration about a grapevine and pruning it. That is certainly a part of it, but verse 1 is significant, in that He is telling you that through Him, God is beginning something *new*, that *He* is the real vine! What He is telling you is that He is the beginning of the Israel of God. You can find that in Galatians 6:16.

The Israel that preceded Him, that Israel that flowed from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—that Israel was not the *real* vine. They were a shadowy and pale imitation of the reality. We could go back to Romans 9 and see that Paul understood this, and he said that the real vine is those who are not necessarily counted from Abraham, but rather, those that God has grafted into the real stock.

This has very serious consequences, because we can look back in the Old Testament and see what happened to the original vine. All through the Old Testament, we find God showing that the original vine which sprang from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, degenerated. Regardless of what He did, no matter how He pruned them, no matter

how He fertilized them, no matter how He cultivated them, they kept bringing forth “wild grapes,” was the way that He put it. They did not bring forth the right fruit.

With that understanding, you have to feed that information into John 15, because it puts a very grave responsibility upon us. We are being grafted into the real vine, which is Jesus Christ.

**John 15:2** “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away [He cuts it away]; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes [that is, He cuts it back], that it may bear more fruit.”

It would be helpful to understand a little bit about grapes and pruning them, so that you understand the metaphor that He is talking about. Grapes put forth two different kinds of branches. Some of those branches, if I can use this word, are just decorations. They look good, but they do not produce any fruit. Other branches look exactly the same, but they do produce fruit. The branches that do not produce any fruit get cut off completely. The branches that do produce fruit do not get cut off from the main stem, but they are cut back so that they will produce more fruit.

You can tie this in to the wheat and tares. The tares appear in with the wheat. It is just another illustration of the same principle. The tares may look the same as the wheat, but the tares do not produce wheat berries.

**John 15:3** “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

The intent of what Christ is saying here is that because you have been with Me (remember, He is speaking this to the disciples), and because they have heard God’s revelation—*word* there simply means its revelation—God, through Christ, preached the Gospel to them, He made the Old Testament applicable to their Christian lives—He says, “you are already clean. You have already been cut back, you are ready to bear fruit.” So *pruning* is the equivalent of *cleansing* that comes by the Word of God. It is the Word of God, the truth of God, that does the pruning in our lives.

You cannot separate this from what He previously said in chapter 14, they are all connected. He is expounding various aspects of things that He said before. As He expounds what He gave before, He begins to add new things, as well.

So you are already clean, you are ready to bear fruit because of the Word, which is the cleansing agent. It is a pruning agent.

**John 15:4** “Abide in Me, and I in you.”

*Abide* means to live, to continue in Me. Here is why: it is really an exhortation to continue.

**John 15:4** “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, . . .”

That is easy to see. Any branch that is cut from the vine, and made independent of the vine, is going to die. In order for a person to bear fruit, in order for a person to continue, he has to stay attached to the vine. There is no such thing as an independent Christian. They are either a part of the church, or they are not. The church is the Israel of God. The church is the body of Jesus Christ. Christ is the head, He is also the vine.

We are members grafted into the vine. We have been immersed into the body. As long as we are part of the body, we have life. If we are cut away from the body, we are no longer attached to the vine, and we are eventually going to wither and die. You may not die right away, in a literal sense, or even a spiritual sense, but eventually, because we are cut from the vine, we are out of the body and we are going to die.

The disciple, and this is important, draws his spiritual sustenance from Christ. This gets back to the practical application of the sacrifices of Leviticus. The major purpose of those sacrifices is to show you and me how to maintain fellowship with God. Without fellowship with God, there is no spiritual sustenance. We have got to remain attached to Christ. “You have to continue with Me, abide in Me.” If we do not, we die.

How do you abide in Christ? This ties directly back to John 14, “If you love Me, keep My commandments, and I will abide in you, and you abide in Me.” It keeps coming back to our yielding to the government of God. That is what keeps us in fellowship with God.

**John 15:4** “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”

If we get cut off from the vine, we get cut away from the genuine vine, the real vine—we are no longer a part of the Israel of God.

**John 15:5** “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me [or lives in Me, or continues in Me], and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

It is sort of like this: suppose that you were living a pretty raunchy life, with all kinds of spiritual and moral weaknesses. A lot of those weaknesses may have been because of the crowd that you ran with. You tended to do the same things that they did, and you had no other reason to do anything better than that, because you fit in with what they did.

And then you came in contact with a person that you began to see was really a person of high moral standards, and you began to associate with that person. As you associated with that person, you began to realize that your life was beginning to change, and you were conforming more and more to what that person was like.

Actually, what was happening was, you were drawing strength from that person's character, from that person's way of living, from that person's attitudes. You liked it, because you began to see that it was producing good things in you, and you were breaking away from your former crowd, and drawing closer and closer to the person who was giving you the strength of his own character, of his own way of life.

What do you suppose would happen if you were cut away from that person who was the good example, and gives you the strength and encouragement of his own life, of his own character, of his own attitudes?

What I am telling you is true, because Paul says in I Corinthians 15:33, “Evil company corrupt good habits.” It also figures in that good company will strengthen habits.

That person is Christ. As long as we continue with Him, as long we are in fellowship with Him, the strength of what He is flows into us. It is a spiritual thing. That is why this fellowship with God is so important. Our fellowship is in prayer; our fellowship is in study; our fellowship is in yielding to His Word. That maintains that fellowship.

When Adam and Eve were cut away from the Tree of Life, any hope of continued communication and fellowship with God went out the window, because they were cut off. God put the flaming sword to guard the way of the Tree of Life.

That is what Christ is talking about here. “Without Me, you can do nothing.” Without our companionship with Him, without our fellowship with Him, our spiritual strength goes

right out the window. It disappears, it disintegrates, it degenerates, it evaporates. That is why there is so much in the Bible, given in illustration, in symbolic ways, how Christ opened up the way into the Holy of Holies, how the curtain was rent so that we could come into the presence of God, so that we can have fellowship with God, so that we can be in His presence—because that is the source of our spiritual strength, and without it, we die spiritually. We can do nothing, because we have to get along, then, with the same spiritual strength as we had before we met the Good Person, whose influence upon us was so positive.

We would go right back to running with our old friends, and doing the old things. Like Peter said, “Like a sow returning to the garbage, and a dog to its vomit.”

**John 15:5-6** “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; . . .”

Can you understand why? Without that companionship, without that fellowship, without that communication with God, we are not going to produce anything worthwhile. God has no recourse but to throw us on the fire, like it says in Ezekiel. There is nothing you can do. Do you realize that a grapevine is useless? Can you think of any good use that a grapevine has ever been put to? Well, Tarzan travelled through the jungle on grapevines. But other than as a means of transportation, I cannot think of anything else.

**John 15:6** “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”