

OpenTheo

John 16



Gospel of John - Steve Gregg

In this session, Steve Gregg discusses the significance of John 16 in the Bible. He emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit for Christians and its role in guiding and teaching believers. Gregg also touches upon the issue of sin and the role of the Holy Spirit in convicting individuals. He concludes by reminding listeners that, despite tribulations and persecution, faith in Jesus Christ is ultimately victorious.

Transcript

We've been going very slowly through the Upper Room Discourse, which began in chapter 13 of John. We took a few sessions on chapter 14 and 15. Now we are in the final chapter of that discourse, John 16.

And this chapter begins with the words, These things I've spoken to you that... Now, throughout this discourse there are repeated references to the reason Jesus was speaking to his disciples. This is the longest recorded discourse of Jesus in the Gospels. And arguably it might be the most important.

Although possibly different ones are more important for different occasions. On this occasion, Jesus is about ready to be arrested. Later that night he'll be arrested.

He'll be taken from the disciples. They will not see him again after that until his resurrection. And after that, they'll only see him occasionally.

Because he'll kind of pop in and pop out during a period of 40 days. After his resurrection, until his ascension. So this is the last they're going to have of an extended period of time.

This is the end of an extended period of time they've already had with him. And he's been mostly talking to them about the ramifications of his leaving and what they can expect afterward. How that he will not really leave them comfortless.

He's going to send another advocate to be with them. And this advocate is the Holy Spirit who will really be Christ in them. He will be with them at all times in the person of

his spirit.

And they will then be the body of Christ. And they can act in his name, in his place, as his body, as his agents. And he said that they will be able to ask anything in his name.

And so they're really going to be pretty well off. But why is he taking the time to say all these things? Well, he gives several comments beginning in chapter 13 and all the way through this chapter. Telling why he's speaking to them.

And this chapter begins with one of those. These things I've spoken to you that you should not be made to stumble. In other words, he said to them at the end of the last chapter that they will be persecuted.

They'll be hated by the world. He said, if the world hated me, it'll hate you. And I'm telling you this now so you won't feel that I concealed anything from you.

That I sold you on this discipleship business without telling you the whole cost. I don't want you to stumble. There are people who stumble because they've not been told the cost of discipleship when they were evangelized.

There's many evangelists who simply talk about, if you come to Christ, you'll go to heaven when you die. Or they may offer other goodies. There's many things, depending on who it is preaching the gospel, that make the gospel sound attractive to people.

But the price tag is often omitted. And then, of course, when the disciples find that they have to pay a certain price, they say, hey, I didn't sign up for this. And then they're gone.

Jesus said there's seed that fell on shallow ground with stone below the surface. And it took off and sprouted upward happily initially. But then, because it had no roots in it, the sun came up and withered it.

And he said these are those who hear the gospel initially. They hear the word of God. And initially, with joy, they receive it.

And they seem to be true converts. And they apparently are because they're alive. They're not dead seed underground.

They're alive. But it says when persecution and tribulation because of the word arise, they quickly fall away. Jesus didn't want his disciples to stumble and fall away.

So he gave them the whole truth about this. Remember the time a man said to him, Lord, I'll follow you wherever you go in Luke chapter 9. And Jesus said, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. You sure you want to go along with me if you don't have someplace to sleep? You don't even have a home maybe sometimes? He would put them off if he could.

Because he knew that if they could be put off by him warning them, then they certainly would be put off by the event itself. If they were unprepared, he wanted them prepared. And so I think it's pretty important.

When I first entered the ministry back in 1970 in the Jesus movement, the preaching that was in the pulpits all the time was, Jesus is coming really soon. Like probably before the end of this year. And that's what we heard every year.

That probably before the end of this year, Jesus will be back because all the signs are lining up. Everything the Bible said would happen in the last days is going on now. And before you know it, Jesus is going to come and rapture people out.

And a whole bunch of people jumped on board to be Christians. Because they figured, well I don't want to miss that. If you miss that, you end up in the tribulation.

We don't want any tribulation. And so even though Jesus said in the world you will have tribulation, but we didn't want that. So we tried to escape.

And basically, the gospel was presented, at least the way it was understood by many, was a means of escaping trouble. And you know what happened? Thousands and thousands of people became part of the Jesus movement. And many thousands are no longer part of Jesus' movement.

And the impression I have is that many of them felt like, well if Jesus is really coming that soon, if the tribulation is right around the corner, if we can sign up today in Jesus' family and miss the tribulation, which is coming any moment now, I guess it will be worth it to sign on with Jesus. But when he didn't come, and a decade passed, and two decades passed, and three and four decades passed, and he didn't come, a lot of these people, they just, like Jesus said about the man in Matthew 24, they said, well my Lord delays his coming. And they began to eat and drink with the drunkards and beat their fellow servants.

And when he comes, he'll find them so doing and cut them in two and give them their part with the hypocrites, Jesus said. They were never really ready. They were really never in their own minds, signed up for hardship.

They stumbled. The gospel was presented to them in a rosy, cheerful, come and get it kind of a fashion. And when they found that there was other parts of reality about being a Christian, like fighting against temptation, and enduring ostracism, and persecution, and so forth.

If that's what I have put up with, well I'm not really sure that I love Jesus that much. And Jesus is saying, if you don't, then get off the train now before you come to those turns in the road. Because if the train throws you off at those turns in the road, you'll be worse off than if you don't get on in the first place.

And so I'm telling you these things, he says, so that you will not be made to stumble. Now there's other reasons he said he's telling them these things. For example, if you go all the way back to chapter 13, verse 19.

Back in chapter 13, verse 19, at the beginning of this discourse. Jesus said, now I tell you before it comes, so that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am he. So the reason I'm telling you this, and in this case he was predicting something, he was predicting that Judas would betray him.

He says, I'm telling you this so that when it happens, you'll remember I said it and you'll believe I am who I said I am. Likewise, in chapter 14, in verse 29. Same thing, same reason.

John 14, 29. He said, and now I've told you before it comes, so that when it does come to pass, you may believe. And then again, in chapter 16, we'll find in verse 4. These things I've told you that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you them.

So one of the reasons that Jesus is saying these things is so that he can predict things that they will see happen. And that will build their faith that Jesus really was who he said he was. That is the purpose of predictive prophecy.

The purpose of predictive prophecy is not to satisfy our curiosity about the future. The purpose of predictive prophecy is so that when it happens, it will authenticate the messenger. It will show that he really was a spokesman from God.

And therefore, you know, is to be believed in the other things he said. If he can predict that something's going to happen, then it happens, then you better believe that the other things he said are true. Even if they weren't predictions at all, but maybe rebukes or maybe expositions of what God is thinking.

When the prophets speak, they're usually preaching, not predicting. But when they predict, they're doing so that when it comes to pass, you'll know that what they were preaching was God's word. And that God wanted you to hear it.

And Jesus said, that's the reason I tell you these things in advance also. In chapter 15, verse 11, he said, these things I've spoken to you that my joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full. Another reason he's speaking to them, so that their joy will be full.

1633, he says, these things I've spoken to you that in me you may have peace. Now, in 1511, he said, so that my joy will be in you. And now he says, so you'll have peace.

In the world, he said, you'll have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. Now, overcoming the world apparently does not mean avoiding tribulation.

In the world, you will have tribulation. I have overcome the world, but that doesn't mean you don't have tribulation in the world. Tribulation is part of being in the world.

In me, you'll have peace, but in the world, you'll have tribulation. I'm saying this so that you will have peace in me, in spite of that tribulation. So, these are the reasons he's spoken to them.

And he says in chapter 16, verse 2, they will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God's service. You know, already in John chapter 9, we saw that the man who had been born blind, whom Jesus healed, was put out of the synagogue.

And his parents would have been, but they'd chickened out and wouldn't testify to what they knew. And therefore, they were not put out of the synagogue. But the Bible says they said as little as they said so that they would not be put out of the synagogue.

Already in John, we have encountered the phenomenon of people being put out of the synagogue for following Jesus. At the time that John wrote this, at a later time, a later generation, at the time this was written, the synagogue had written into their liturgy a curse upon what they called the Nazarenes. The Nazarenes were what they called the Christians.

The Jews of the first century called the Christians the Nazarenes. And the synagogue service, after the time of Christ and the apostles, actually wrote into its liturgy a curse against Nazarenes, which was to guarantee that Christian Jews would not come to the synagogue because they would not be able to utter a curse against their own people. So we can see that putting the Christians out of the synagogue was something that Jesus knew was going to happen.

He told them in advance so that when it would happen, they'd know it was that he knew. He says, yeah, they'll put you out of the synagogues. The time's coming.

Whoever kills you will think that he offers God's service. That seems hard to believe, but it really did happen. Think of the Apostle Paul before he was the Apostle Paul.

He was chasing down Christians, approving of their death, imprisoning them, thinking he was doing God a service. And he said later on when he wrote Romans chapter 10, he says, you know, I can vouch for the Jews that they are zealous for God, but not according to knowledge. He knows that their persecution of Christians was out of ignorance, not out of lack of zeal for God.

They thought they were doing God a service by persecuting the Christians. And he says, these things they will do because they have not known the Father nor me. And that's tragic because the Jews did what they did because they thought they were serving the Father.

Jesus said, actually, if they'd known him, they wouldn't do that. They don't know him. They're living their whole lives zealous for and dedicated to the service of a God that they don't know correctly.

And, you know, we can think, because we are Christians, how out of touch with the heart of God those Jews were who persecuted the Christians in the early days and who thought they were doing God a service when they killed them. You know, how way out of touch with God's mind that was. And yet they had no doubt they were servants of the true God.

They were standing for the law and what the scriptures said, the Old Testament scriptures. And I wonder how much in danger Christians may be of so misinterpreting the heart and the mind of God that we think we're doing God a service by condemning certain sinners. Now, of course, we say, well, the Jews weren't condemning sinners.

They were condemning Christians. Yeah, but to them, Christians were the sinners. Christians were the blasphemers as far as they knew.

Christians were the ones who were displeasing God by their following a false teacher, Jesus. And therefore, Christians were the sinners in their judgment, by their thinking, by their understanding of their Bible. How many Christians might there be who condemn? Maybe we don't kill people.

We're not in a position to do that now. But they, in the Inquisition, people who called themselves Christians tortured and killed people. Just like the Jews had done to Jesus and to the apostles.

So, so-called Christians did. Other people who they called heretics. Same behavior.

And today, we don't have the burning of heretics. We don't torture people. We're not allowed to do that.

We're a civilized people. But we can carry placards that have the same sentiment. You know, God hates gays and things like that.

These people who carry those things think they're doing God a service. But they're so far removed from the heart of God that it's sad. It's sad.

You know, I had a call today on the radio. A lady called and her son. She's an older lady.

Her son was listening to a teacher I'm familiar with, who's a pretty harsh teacher. That is, he teaches a pretty hard line. And her son and daughter-in-law had become really critical and really judgmental.

So much so that they think all the Christians that aren't hyper-Calvinists like themselves are going to hell. And they're telling themselves. So here's this young couple telling their own parents, who are Christian parents, that they're going to hell.

And I'm sure they're thinking that they're representing the uncompromised Word of God. When Jesus was trying to go through Samaria and the Samaritans were denying him lodging there, James and John said to Jesus, Lord, shall we call fire out of heaven on them like Elijah did? And Jesus said, you do not know what manner of spirit you are of. The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

And how much might we be in danger of acting religiously and not knowing what manner of spirit we're really of? That is the great danger. And, you know, the people who do these things, who call themselves Christians, are never thinking to compare their behavior with that of Jesus. No one who was an Inquisitor, stretching out a hair-tick on the rack, could have in his mind pictured Jesus doing that, could he? It's like Christians forget Jesus is what it's all about.

They think it's religion, it's orthodoxy, it's doing the right thing, it's measuring up. It's fitting in to the right religious group. That's what God cares about.

And none of them behave like Jesus when they're condemning others. Jesus didn't come to condemn the world, he came to save the world, he said. He didn't come to destroy men's lives.

If you want to do that, you don't know what manner of spirit you're of. You've got a different spirit. And that's a dangerous thing, to have a different spirit.

Since the Holy Spirit's the only one that's safe. Other spirits are demonic. Anyway, Jesus said that that would be the case with many of the Jews that would persecute his disciples.

We know he's talking about Jews, as opposed to, say, Gentile persecutors, because he says they'll put you out of synagogues. That's a Jewish place. Now, of course, they were also persecuted by Gentiles later on.

But the initial persecutors of the church were the Jewish people, acting under the influence of the Sanhedrin. It was the Sanhedrin that had Christ crucified. True, the Romans pounded the nails, but the Sanhedrin blackmailed Pilate into having the Romans do that.

The Sanhedrin stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr. The Sanhedrin sent Saul of Tarsus out to arrest them in foreign countries and bring them back. And then when he got saved, the Sanhedrin sent out people to try to kill him.

The first persecutors of the Christian church were the Jewish state, the Jewish establishment. Later, the Romans picked up on that, and since then, many Gentile governments have done so. He says they do this because they don't know the Father.

And yet so many of the ones who think they're doing God a service would be offended to

be told that they don't know the Father, that they don't know God. They think they're the only ones who do. They think everyone else doesn't understand him quite as correctly as they do.

But he says, no, they don't know the Father. They wouldn't act that way. But these things I've told you, verse 4, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

And these things I did not say to you at the beginning because I was with you. In other words, I didn't have to warn you about this when I was here, because all the attacks against our movement have been directed toward me personally. I've been here, and I have been the target for all the attacks.

You, my disciples, have kind of been in my shadow. You've been kind of in the crowds while I'm speaking. The enemies have all targeted me.

I've been here to deflect the hostility toward myself from you, but I'm going to be gone now, and now it's just going to be you that they hate. And he says, I didn't have to tell you these things earlier because I was here, but I'm not going to be here now. And now you're going to be the ones that everyone hates and treats that way.

But now I go away to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, where are you going? Well, that's not exactly true, because back in John chapter 14, Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you're going, John 14 and 5. And he said, well, how can we know the way? And that's when Jesus said, I am the way, and I'm going to the Father, and so forth. But I guess after he answered them on that occasion, none of them were still asking, where are you going? He says, you're not asking that question anymore. None of you asks, where are you going? But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you.

But if I depart, I will send him to you. Now, consider this. Would you rather have the Holy Spirit as you have him now, or would you rather have Jesus personally here with you as he was with the disciples? I've got to say, most Christians would think, I'd rather have him where I could see him.

I'd rather be able to talk to him like I can talk to my friends. I'd like to be able to have Jesus personally with me. Why is it better that he goes away and sends the Holy Spirit? Well, he didn't say it's easier.

He didn't say it's easier for you that I go away. It's better. It may be harder in some ways.

It may require you to grow up and not be just children tagging along with the teacher. You may have to become teachers yourselves. You may have to become grown-ups and let the Holy Spirit teach you from within.

You may have to learn how to discern the voice of the Spirit speaking to you. There's some difficulty in that, but it's better for you because ultimately, no matter where you go, we can be together. That wasn't the case when, for example, Jesus sent out the twelve two-by-two to various cities that he would later come to.

Or when he sent out the seventy two-by-two, he wasn't with them. They were away from him. That's because he could only be in one place at a time.

He sent them out because he couldn't go to those places. And therefore, they had to go without him. He gave them authorization to heal the sick and raise the dead and cast out demons, but he wasn't with them.

And he says, but now, from now on, I can be with you all the time. Not in the same sense. Maybe not even in the sense that you would prefer.

But in a sense, it's better for you. And certainly better for the kingdom of God. Because to spread the kingdom of God requires that Christians take the gospel everywhere.

And Jesus, being in them, can be everywhere they are. That's better. That's an improvement.

Now, I think sometimes we might think, well, I'd rather have Jesus than the Holy Spirit as I have him now. Because, frankly, having the Holy Spirit now hasn't been all that satisfying. I think a lot of Christians don't really know the presence of the Holy Spirit the way that the early Christians did.

On the day of Pentecost, I think they felt Jesus was with them more mightily than ever before. Because, and it's not just feeling, but they were aware. They sensed the presence of God with them in the power of the Holy Spirit that was given to them.

They could see evidence of the Holy Spirit doing signs and wonders among them. This is something that many Christians cannot testify to. And when Jesus said, it's better for you that I'm not with you, so the Holy Spirit will be with you, we have to ask, well, am I really experiencing the thing that he said is better than him being here? Sometimes it doesn't seem like it.

In which case, we have to ask whether our experience of the Holy Spirit is what is normative. Whether we are experiencing the presence and the power of God in our lives in a way that really is better than if Jesus was here. We may not be, but apparently he felt like we're supposed to be.

And that should give us a gauge by which to measure our own experience. Are we subnormal? Are we normal? What are we? We should use this comment as a means of kind of measuring that. Is my walk with God better than it would be if Jesus was here in the flesh with me? I think a lot of people would say no.

That's the definition of the need to grow and to get back to a more normal, dynamic walk with God. I don't say dynamic in the sense of always exciting and always sensational and always miraculous. But real.

That his presence with you is real. When I got baptized in the Holy Spirit, I didn't see any miracles. I didn't even speak in tongues.

I didn't fall down. I didn't get goose bumps. I didn't feel warm honey poured over my head.

I didn't have any of those experiences. Yet, from that day on, God's presence with me was a reality that I knew somehow. I don't know how to say it.

I didn't feel it like warmth inside or something like that. I was aware of the presence of God always with me. The apostles even had that more than I or anyone I know has had that.

I think that we need to cultivate an awareness of God's presence with us by being filled with the Spirit. And by walking in the Spirit. Because that's what Jesus was assuming the disciples would have after he left.

He said, that's better still than me being here. It always struck me as almost ironic because I don't know very many of us who would rather not have Jesus here in the flesh than what we have now. That means what we have now should be perhaps improved.

Now verse 8, when he has come, that is the Holy Spirit, he will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. And then he breaks this down. Of sin because they do not believe in me.

Of righteousness because I go to my Father and you see me no more. Of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. Now this is a difficult paragraph.

Just understand what he means in some respects. First of all the word convict. In the Greek it's elenko.

In different contexts it has different meanings of course like many words do in different contexts. It can mean expose. It can mean refute.

It can mean convince or convict. Now those are all widely different thoughts. One of the expositors that I highly respect would render this that the Holy Spirit will expose the error of the world.

When he says he will convict the world he is not necessarily talking about conviction of the Holy Spirit like we normally think of. Which does not mean that the Holy Spirit does not convict us. We normally think of someone feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit meaning they have committed sin and they feel guilty.

Now such conviction is real. But the question is whether that is what Jesus is talking about here or not. We could see if he just said he will convict the world of sin.

Well I can understand the Spirit's conviction of sin and guilt. But why would he say he will convict the world of righteousness and convict the world of judgment? Obviously that is a different kind of conviction than we normally use when we talk about the term I am convicted by the Holy Spirit or the Spirit convicted me. We usually mean I felt nailed and condemned and I felt like I did the wrong thing.

Which is I believe a genuine experience I am not trying to minimize that. But the question is that what he means here. As I said one favorable translation would be when he has come he will expose the error of the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

Now the world has its own ideas about sin and about righteousness and about judgment. And the Holy Spirit exposes that error and corrects it, reproves it, refutes it. He explains one by one what he means.

He will expose the error of the world's view of sin because they don't believe in me. Not believing in Jesus is the chief sin of the world. That is not the only sin.

I know some teachers who say there is only one sin now that people are going to have to answer to God for and that is the sin of unbelief. What they mean by that of course is no matter how many other sins you commit if you believe in Christ they will be covered by grace. And therefore none of your other sins really matter just the sin of unbelief.

However that could be very misleading and it is based largely on the way they understand this particular verse. He will convict the world of sin because they do not believe in me. In other words some preachers say it is just not believing in Jesus that is the only sin that the Holy Spirit is ever going to convict people of.

The rest of the sins don't matter. You can do as many sins as you want as long as you believe in Jesus. But unbelief is the only sin you will be condemned for.

In one sense you can see the reasoning if what they mean is no matter how many other sins you have committed before you come to faith when you come to faith that expunges your record and therefore the failure to come to faith is the only thing that would keep you from being saved. But that doesn't mean that God doesn't care how many sins you have committed otherwise. Sins are forbidden for a reason.

They are not laws that are just made to play some kind of a game. The things that God defines as sin are things that are damaging to people. Damaging to the person who sins, damaging to others and damaging to God's glory.

It matters a great deal how many sins you commit. True if you commit a thousand in your lifetime or a million in your lifetime they can all be expunged by grace by just believing in Jesus. But I would hope that a Christian who comes to full repentance would say, I'm sorry that I committed a million sins instead of just a thousand.

Because the extra nine hundred and nine hundred thousand that I did hurt that many people and brought grief to God that much more. If we are thinking about the only reason we don't want to sin is that we don't want to go to hell. The only reason we don't want to sin is that we don't want to suffer the penalty.

Then we are not thinking about sin as Jesus did and as the Bible teaches. We should be concerned about sin because of the grief it brings to God. And the failure to glorify God that sin is.

And the damage it does to other persons. And the way it robs God of what he should have had from us instead of sinning. He should have had obedience from us.

He should have had our service. I mean think of David's sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. Now he got forgiven, right? He was forgiven when he repented.

So it doesn't matter if you sin, right? Wrong. His whole household was plagued with violence as a result of his sin. And the prophet said that would be true not necessarily as a judgment but as a prediction.

David's sin led to his sons sinning in ways that led to some of them doing things that they would be killed for. His house was plagued by sin. Sure he got forgiven.

But that doesn't mean it didn't matter that he did the sins. In fact when Nathan the prophet rebuked him he says, You have given the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme. That's the thing.

That was the worst part of his sin and he knew it. When he repented in Psalm 51 he says, Against you, you only have I sinned and done this deed in your sight. Why did David say he had sinned only against the Lord? He had sinned against Bathsheba.

He had sinned against Uriah. He had sinned against the baby who died as a result. He had sinned against the nation.

But he was most mindful of the fact that he had sinned against the Lord. That he had given the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme. He had reproached God with his sins.

And that is the primary motivation for hating sin. Not because if I sin I might go to hell. No, I'm not going to go to hell.

I'm a Christian. And I'm not going to be sinning with that attitude either if I'm a Christian. You know the prodigal son, what was his grief over? When he came home.

He said, Father, I've sinned against heaven and in your sight. He didn't say, Father, I've messed up my life. Boy, have I had a rotten time.

You know, I've sinned against myself. I want to come home where things are better for me. No, Jesus told that story in order to depict genuine repentance.

The boy said, Father, I've sinned against heaven and in your sight. Make me as a servant, I'm not worthy to be a son. And that's true repentance when a person realizes that their sin has been against God.

Now, Jesus said the world proved itself, proved wrong about what sin is. Because the greatest sin is that they did not believe in me. But it would be a mistake to think that's the only sin that he thinks the Holy Spirit would ever be concerned about.

And when people try to use this verse to make that point, They're truncating the whole issue of what sin is and why it's objectionable. He says the Holy Spirit will convict the world of righteousness. Because I go to my father and you see me no more.

Again, the connection between the first part and the last part of the sentence is not obvious. The pastor I used to sit under felt like the connection was this. That Jesus was saying the Holy Spirit will convict the world of what righteousness really is.

Because I'm going to go up into heaven and you won't see me. And my ascension into heaven will be God's vindication of me. It will be God's way of showing the world that he did accept me.

And that I am the standard of righteousness that God approves of. And thus by receiving me into heaven as he will, the Holy Spirit will be convicting the world of righteousness. However, that would be the Father, not the Holy Spirit convicting the world of righteousness.

How is the Comforter convicting the world of righteousness? I'm not really sure how he means this, but it seems to me he may simply mean this. That while I was here, I was correcting them about their views of righteousness. But I'm going away and I won't be here anymore.

You won't see me anymore. So the Holy Spirit will come and take up the job that I've been doing. He will convict the world of righteousness because that's what I've been doing until now.

And I won't be here anymore to do it. So he'll do it. I'm going to pass the baton to him.

I've been trying to show the Pharisees that their ideas of righteousness are wrong. They've got this externalistic idea that if they just pay their tithes and admit Anderson Cummings, it's okay that they can neglect the weightier matters of the law like justice and mercy and faithfulness. They're wrong.

And I've been here convicting them. But I'm leaving now. Now the Holy Spirit will have to come and do that.

Do what I've been doing. And this is the end of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. The world's idea of judgment needs to be refuted and exposed.

How so? Well, consider. How does the world judge of what happened at the cross? It looks to the world that Jesus was judged. That Jesus was condemned.

That Jesus lost in the court, in the execution. He was the loser. But that's not really how it was.

The prince of this world was judged at the cross. Satan, who seemed to be the winner, was the loser in that case. I mean, look at Jesus' words at the end of this chapter.

He says, In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Well, the world would not judge that he had overcome the world. The world overcame him.

Jesus, at the very moment he was saying, I have conquered the world, that's what overcome means, conquered. I've conquered the world, he says. Don't worry, guys.

Cheer up. I've conquered the world. And here they are hiding in an upper room for fear that someone will find them and arrest them.

And he's got this little ragtag group, and even one of them has betrayed him by now. And he says, Don't worry, everybody. I've conquered the world.

How would anyone think that they had conquered the world when the circumstances that he was in? Because judgment of the world was taking place, but it looked like the judgment of him. You know, when Pilate was interviewing Jesus, we might refer to that as Jesus being on trial before Pilate, or we might say that Pilate was on trial before Jesus. To the world, Jesus was being judged.

But Pilate is the one who really was judged. What does the world remember about Pilate? He's guilty, as charged. Pilate is not remembered as the righteous judge who condemned a criminal Jesus.

Pilate is remembered as the unrighteous offender who surrendered the righteous Jesus

to being judged. The judgment of the world is all turned upside down. What the world thinks is up is really down.

What the world thinks is down is really up. What the world calls good is really evil. And what the world calls evil is really good.

That's because the prince of this world, the ruler of this world, Satan, informs him. But he himself is judged at the cross. Earlier, in John 12, 31, Jesus said, Now is the judgment of this world.

Now the prince of this world will be cast out. Where? At the cross. At the cross? It didn't look like Satan was cast out.

It looked like he won the day. It looked like Jesus was the one cast out. He was the one cast into a grave.

And yet, Jesus was the victor. He overcame the world. The world had its whole concept of judgment turned upside down.

Who's really being judged here? The Holy Spirit will come and prove the world wrong about these things. Even so, there's still much about this little paragraph of Jesus that is difficult. But he said, and maybe this is why he says this next, I still have many things to say to you, but you can't bear them now.

Maybe that's why that's so difficult. You know, maybe it's just hard for us to figure out. Maybe we're not ready for it yet.

He says, I have a lot of things to tell you guys, but you're not ready for it yet. However, the time will come when you are. It's just not going to be soon.

And so he says, when the spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak and he will tell you things to come. He will glorify me, for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are mine.

Therefore, I said that he will take of mine and declare it to you. Now, what Jesus is saying is, you have been accustomed to receiving teaching from me. My words, you've hung on every word of mine.

I once thought you might leave like others, but you said, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life. You think that I'm the only source of these words for you. Well, the Holy Spirit is going to come and he's going to take what's mine, my words, and teach you from them.

You can't have me always here talking in the way that I've been talking. And there are things still for you to learn. There are things I would like to tell you, but you're not able to

bear them yet, so you're going to have to learn them after I'm gone.

But don't worry. The Holy Spirit will take my words, the things that are mine, and give them to you. You will still be taught by me, in other words, through my spirit.

Just as Jesus said several times in the Gospel of John, the words I speak are not my own. I don't say anything on my own authority or my own initiative, but the Father gives me. So now the Holy Spirit will not speak on his own authority.

He will speak what he hears from Jesus. And he'll give it to the disciples. So that the teaching ministry of Christ will continue after he's gone, through the Holy Spirit.

Now the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12 and other places, mentioned that the Holy Spirit speaks through people who have different kinds of gifts. To one is given, Paul said, a word of wisdom. To another, a word of knowledge.

To another, faith. To another, prophecy. To another, discerning of spirits.

To another, tongues. To another, the interpretation of tongues. And there are others.

But the point I made is, these are all speaking kinds of gifts. These are all gifts where the Holy Spirit communicates through gifted believers prophetically. And Jesus continues to teach.

Jesus continues to talk to the church and lead them into all truth through the ministry of his spirit. So Jesus says, there's things you don't understand now. And I've kind of intended for it to be that way, because I don't think you're ready to understand them yet.

What kinds of things? Well, like, maybe that Gentiles will be in one body with believing Jews and not need to be circumcised. How long did it take the disciples to learn that from the Holy Spirit? Years. It was years after Pentecost that Peter saw that vision of the sheet and became aware that Gentiles, without being circumcised, without becoming Jews, in other words, could become Christians.

You could actually go directly to Jesus without passing go. You don't have to go through the Jewish route first to become a prophet, then become a Christian. They didn't understand that.

They couldn't receive that at the time. They had still so much racial prejudice in them from their upbringing that it would have shocked them. It would have stumbled them.

He said, you're not ready, you can't bear it yet. But the Holy Spirit will gradually get you there. He'll lead you into all truth.

And you'll get there eventually, don't worry. Now, the Holy Spirit does lead us into all

truth. Over in 1 John, written by the same author, of course, as the gospel that we're reading, in 1 John 2, verse 27, 1 John 2:27 says, But the anointing which you have received from Him, that means the Holy Spirit that you have received from Him, abides in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you.

But as that same anointing, that is the Holy Spirit, teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie. Remember Jesus said He's the Spirit of truth, who will lead you into all truth. He says He teaches you all things.

He's true. He's not a lie. And just as He has taught you, you will abide in Christ.

Now, He says you don't need any man to teach you, because the Holy Spirit in you will teach you everything you need to know. You might say, well then what are we doing here? We've just wasted eight weeks of our lives sitting under a human teacher. Well, that's true.

No, not true that you wasted the time, I hope. But it is true that you have listened to teachers. And so have I. And learned things that were worthy of knowing, I hope.

I hope that teachers have, over the years, taught you things that you wouldn't have easily discovered yourself, or would not as quickly have learned, because the teachers did more research, or had been at it longer, or whatever. The teachers knew some things that you did not yet know. But you can learn from teachers, but what John is saying when he says you don't need anyone to teach you, because the Holy Spirit can teach you, is that you really could survive without teachers.

The Holy Spirit can guide you, the Holy Spirit can teach you what you need to know, though He may wish to teach you through teachers sometimes. After all, that's a gift to the Holy Spirit. One of the gifts.

Teaching is one of the gifts. So if a teacher has that gift, and if it's from the Holy Spirit, and you learn something through that gift, it is the Holy Spirit teaching, hopefully. Now that doesn't mean that anyone who has that gift is a perfect teacher, or everything they say has to be trusted.

The Holy Spirit in you also has to discern. In fact, in the context of 1 John, he says that I write these things so no one will deceive you. Because there are teachers who say things that are wrong.

In fact, every teacher probably says some things that are wrong. And therefore, not only do you have the advantage of listening to people who may have the gift of teaching, but you have the obligation, through the Holy Spirit that's in you, to discern when what they're saying is really the Holy Spirit, and when it's not. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5, Prove all things, and hold fast what is good.

That's 1 Thessalonians 5, and verse 21. Test all things, hold fast what is good. And that's immediately after the verse that says do not despise prophecies.

Do not despise prophecies when you hear them. If someone prophesies, don't despise it, but test it, he says. Don't just accept it.

Don't either despise it or accept it uncritically. You hear a prophecy, test it. And if it's good, hold on to it.

If it's not good, discard it. In other words, the Holy Spirit might speak through a prophet, through a teacher, through an exhorter, through someone with a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge. The Holy Spirit may speak through a gifted person, but that person is not perfect.

That person, there's always that little bit of mixture perhaps between what that person thinks the Holy Spirit is telling them and their prejudices or something else. So the listener also has to judge. The Holy Spirit in you can teach you to distrust certain things that you hear, even from teachers.

But it doesn't mean you cannot benefit from teachers. Teachers often have done some of the work that you would do yourself if you had the time. They might be a little further in their learning on some points than you have learned.

And so you can benefit, but you still can't just trust the teacher. You should never allow a pastor or an author or a broadcaster or any other person who teaches to just be... You should never just say, Well, you know, I guess he seems like he knows the Bible better than I do. I'll just accept what he says.

I used to be that way when I was a teenager. The pastor I sat under seemed to know the Bible by heart. He could quote so much scripture in his teaching, I just thought, Man, I'd never get to a place where I know the Bible like that.

And I remember having a conversation with somebody about something this man had said, and the other person was saying, Well, I'm not sure he's right about that. And I was stunned. How can you say that you think he's not right about that? Do you know the Bible as well as he does? You know, you don't know the Bible like he knows.

How could he be wrong? As it turned out, over the years, I came to think some things differently than that man, too. But I remember how immature my own attitude was, how wrong, it was almost cult-like, you know, when you'll just let somebody else think for you. And you'll just say, Well, I can't trust my own discernment about this because he knows more than I do.

Don't go there. Because out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God sometimes will speak, and sometimes he has revealed things to the babes and hidden them from the

wise and prudent. You may not be an intellect, you may not be a Bible scholar, but God may show you that something is wrong, that a man is saying, Who's got a Ph.D. in theology? You have the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth.

He may lead you using teachers. He may use you independently of teachers. And he may use you in spite of teachers, as he might teach you in spite of teachers.

Because teachers can lead you the wrong way, and the Holy Spirit can say, Uh-uh, that's not right. Don't go there. So, he says, the Holy Spirit will guide you.

He'll take from me what I would say to you, and he'll give it to you. Whereas I would like to have done so myself, but I have to go. Verse 16.

A little while and you will not see me. And again, a little while and you will see me. Because I go to my Father.

Now, this sounds like he's talking about his going away being crucified and coming back when he's resurrected. And he could, in fact, be saying that. Although he said similar things back in chapter 14, verse 19.

He said, a little while longer, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live also. And in the context, when they said, wait, how will we see you and the world won't see you? He said, well, if you love me and keep my commandments, the Father will love you, and we will come make our home with you.

In other words, we will come through the Holy Spirit and live in you. That's how you'll see me and the world won't. You'll receive the inward revelation of my presence with you.

The world won't have that. So, the world won't see me, but you will. And how? Well, we'll come and live inside you.

That's how. And so, now he says again, the time has come when you won't see me, but then you will see me. If he's talking the same way as he was in chapter 14, and there's no reason to doubt that he would be, it's the same conversation, then he may be talking about, you will see me in the sense of having an inward revelation of me when the Holy Spirit comes.

And it seems more like it now, because he says, and again, a little while, you will see me because I go to the Father. Now, if he's saying, you won't see me while I'm in the grave, but you'll see me when I come out of the grave and appear to you after the resurrection, why would that be because I go to the Father? That's actually prior to him going to the Father. But when he goes to the Father, then he will send the Spirit, he said.

And so, it sounds like the you will see me is perhaps not referring to what we might initially think, although it's obscure. Some commentators have pointed out that the

distinction between seeing Jesus in the second coming and seeing him by the inward revelation of the indwelling Holy Spirit, that distinction is almost vanished in this discourse, because it seems like you can hardly tell which seeing he's talking about, which coming he's referring to in most of these passages. Then some of his disciples said among themselves, what is this that he says to us, a little while and you will not see me, and again, a little while and you will see me because I go to my Father.

They said, therefore, what is this that he says? A little while. We do not know what he's saying. Now, they didn't say this out loud for Jesus either.

They were whispering among themselves, apparently. And Jesus knew that they desired to ask him. And he said to them, are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, a little while and you will not see me, and again, a little while and you will see me? Most assuredly I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice, and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.

A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come. But as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish for the joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore, you are now sorrowful, but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

Now, there's a good chance he is talking about seeing them after his resurrection, since we know that he did. And they did rejoice, by the way. They did rejoice when they saw him in the resurrection, although it took them a while.

Sometimes they weren't sure it was him. Sometimes they were scared. Sometimes they had mixed reactions when they saw him.

And sometimes they doubted. And all those reactions are recorded of them after he's appeared to them in the resurrection. Certainly after Pentecost, they were filled with joy, so much so that people thought they'd been drinking way too much that day.

And that's how they were filled, with joy in the Holy Spirit. But he compares it to a woman having a child. Many women in this room have had children.

And I think all would probably testify that it was a painful experience. I've had a few women have said they didn't feel a thing. Like my mom.

She was unconscious. She didn't feel it at all. She was knocked out.

She just woke up when I was there. She's not even sure I'm hers. Couldn't swear by it.

We've never done DNA testing. I have met women. There was one woman in McMinnville when we lived there, not a student, but a friend of our school.

And she never wanted to have kids because she was terrified of labor. But her husband

wanted to have kids. And she was counseled to go ahead and go forward with it and trust God and so forth.

And when her labor time came, everyone was praying for her because she was so terrified of labor. We were praying for her at the school and all that. And she, when the baby came, said she didn't feel a thing.

And she was awake for the whole labor. She said there was just no pain whatsoever in it. Don't count on that happening every time.

Jesus said when a woman has a baby, there is pain. There is sorrow. There is weeping.

But he said after the baby comes, it's all forgotten. Now most women have said, I don't forget. The baby came and I still remember.

It was painful. But most women, even though they remember it, go ahead and have another baby. And by the time labor comes, they think, I forgot about this.

I wouldn't have done this again if I remembered. Women can remember the pain afterwards. But more often than not, they go forward and say, I'm going to go through that again.

They probably wouldn't if they could remember as graphically what they were feeling at the moment of labor before. But it is something that in some measure you forget. The baby is worth it.

For the joy that a child has been born, you forget about the labor pains and decide to rejoice in that and maybe even have another one later. And he says that's how it is for you. You're going to weep and mourn because I'm taking you.

But I'm going to come back and you'll rejoice. And there is something being born here. The kingdom of God is passing into a new phase here with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

It's the birth of a new era of God's kingdom. And most things cause a little pain in coming to birth. And you don't bring a baby into the world without a little pain and suffering.

But it's worth it. And so no one will take your joy from you after that. Now in verse 23, he says, And in that day you will ask me nothing.

Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Now he says you're going to ask the Father in my name later. Up till now you haven't

asked in my name. Now they have asked the Father things, we presume, because he has already taught them to pray to the Father.

Way back at the Sermon on the Mount, early in his ministry, he said, When you pray, pray our Father, which art in heaven. So he had taught them to pray to the Father. But until now they've never prayed in Jesus' name.

Why? They couldn't. They weren't him. To pray in his name is possible now because we are him.

He dwells in us. We are his flesh and his bones. We are his hands and his feet.

We are his body. When we come before God, it's not someone other than him approaching God. It's him.

We, in his name, bearing his identity, authorized by him to stand in his place. This is what happens. He says, you've never done that before.

At that point, you won't be asking me anymore. You won't be praying to Jesus, you'll be praying to the Father, he said. And he says, these things I've spoken to you in figurative language, apparently referring to things that he's talked about parabolically, like I'm the vine and you're the branches, or the imagery of a baby being born, and that kind of stuff.

But the time is coming when I'll no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray to the Father for you. For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came forth from God.

I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father. Notice he said, you're going to pray to the Father in my name.

You're not going to pray to me. And I'm not going to pray to the Father for you. You're going to pray to the Father and he's going to listen to you.

And this is so contrary to what many Christians think. They're so alienated from the Father. Many times people have had very bad role models of fathers themselves.

I know a woman, a godly woman, who cannot bring herself to address God as Father in her prayers. Her father was abusive, her father was unfaithful, her father abandoned the family. Later when she was a teenager she ran into her father in a bus and he ignored her, he wouldn't look at her.

I mean, it's like her father was everything that a father isn't. And unfortunately there's an awful lot of people nowadays, more than probably ever in our society before, who've never really gotten to know their father. Because their father impregnated their mother and then never showed up again.

Or for whatever other reason, they were either physically or emotionally absent. And so people often have had very bad experiences with fathers. And therefore the idea of thinking of God as a father, which Jesus used as his primary teaching analogy, which had such potency in that culture, has lost so much of its potency in our own.

Because in their day a father valued his children as his chief treasures. They were going to take over his family farm, or his family business, they were going to carry on his name. They were the only immortality he knew about, because in the Old Testament they didn't know about heaven and hell, they weren't told.

And so the average Jew saw his children, and his children's children, as the greatest blessing he could have, because they would perpetuate his name and his memory after he was gone. They were the closest thing to immortality he knew to think about, to hope for. Children were precious and revered, and as Jesus said, even the evil fathers would delight to give good gifts to their children.

They would never give a child a scorpion if he asked for an egg, or a serpent if he asked for a fish. You know, I think there have been fathers in recent years that would do that. I heard about a father once who wanted to teach his son to never trust anybody, apparently even himself, and he put his little toddler on the table and said, here, jump to daddy, and the child jumped and the father let him fall to the ground.

What was going through that man's head, I have no idea, except that it was nothing. The man was a fool. But that there could be fathers like that, just means how far the institution and the position of fatherhood has deteriorated.

And no surprise, since knowing God as Father is the most accurate way that God wants us to know him. It was the most revelatory way that Jesus taught us about the fathers. He's like your father.

And that was a warming thought. That was a reverential and warming thought. The father was revered, but he was also loved, and it was known that he was on your side.

Your father would die for you, your father would support you, your father would discipline you too, but he was on your side. Whom the father loves, he chastens, but it's because he loves. And these things were known about fathers.

This isn't known by everybody about fathers today. I've been fortunate, I had a good father, and for me to transfer what I know about my father to my image of God is a very wholesome thing. But some people can't do that with their fathers.

And so there are people today who say, I don't want to pray to the father, I want to pray to Jesus. Because they think the father, isn't he kind of the ogre God up there, who has lightning bolts in his fist, ready to hurl them down at anyone who steps out of line. And Jesus is the nice God, the nice son, who stepped up and said, oh father, please don't hurt

them.

I kind of like them. Let me go and die for them. So that God says, well, better do a good job of it, because otherwise I'm going to wipe those guys out.

I mean, people think of God the father that way. It's the opposite of what Jesus said. Jesus said, God so loved the world, he sent his only begotten son.

The one who wanted to save you was not Jesus, it was God. Jesus did it because he loved his father. It's the father who wanted to save us.

God is on our side. That's why he sent his son. And God is the father that everybody needs, of course.

Not everyone has an earthly father. If you had a good earthly father, that's a good model of God for you to relate to. If you had a bad earthly father, never had a good earthly father, then now you have one.

And you probably knew what you wished your father was. I think children kind of know what a father ought to be and know when their father isn't that. Well, God is that, and that's what Jesus is saying.

He says, now listen, don't think that you have to talk to me and I'll go to God for you. The father loves you. You talk to him yourself.

He's as eager to hear from you as he is to hear from me. You just talk to him in my name. You go in my place.

You go as my agent. You go to him as one of my disciples, and he'll accept you, just like he accepts me. That's what it says in Ephesians chapter 1, that we are accepted in the beloved.

Jesus is the beloved. In him we're accepted before God. You know, over in chapter 17, verse 23, John 17, 23, when Jesus is praying, in the middle of a sentence it says, that they may be made perfect in one that the world may know that you have sent me and that you have loved them as you have loved me.

Jesus said the Father has loved the disciples even as he has loved Jesus. Now we know that the Father loves Jesus. We never had any doubts about that, I hope.

But until we know that the Father loves us even as he loves Jesus, then we have not yet come to know the Father in the way that Jesus came to make him an acquaintance of ours. And he says, in that day, you'll ask the Father in my name. You won't ask me.

And I'm not going to go ask the Father. You go ask him yourself. You've got an audience with God just as much as I do.

In my name. You can go and talk to him. I give you my name.

You can take that as your ticket and you can go talk to him. He'll accept you just like you're me. That's what he's saying.

His disciples said to him, See, now you're speaking plainly and using no figure of speech. Now we are sure that you know all things and have no need that anyone should question you. By this we believe that you came forth from God.

What are they referring to here? Well, remember back in verse 18? Back in 17 and 18, they didn't understand him. They're questioning among themselves, what's he mean by that? What's he mean, I'm going a little while, I'll come back. And then it says in verse 19, Jesus knew they desired to ask him and so he answered their question.

They say, oh, now we see that you don't need anyone to ask you anything because you just answered our questions when we didn't ask him. So we know that you're God. Now you can read our minds.

Jesus answered them, Do you now believe? Indeed the hour is coming. Yes, has now come. That you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave me alone.

And yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. That's a very discouraging thing for him to tell them near the end of his discourse. You know, you think you're loyal to me, you think you believe in me, you're all going to abandon me.

I won't be really alone because my Father is going to stand with me, but the rest of you are going to abandon me. And then he said this, These things I've spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you'll have tribulation.

You live in two places at once. You live in the world, and you live in Christ as a Christian. And in Christ you have peace, in the world you have tribulation.

That's what he says. I'm telling you this so that you'll have peace in me, though you'll have tribulation in the world. You can have peace and tribulation at the same time, because you live in the world and in Christ at the same time.

And therefore, this is why it is called a peace that passes understanding in Philippians chapter 4. Because who can understand that? Who can understand how you can be at peace in the midst of tribulation? Well, you can be. He said, in the world you'll have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. That is, I am your model, my spirit is going to be in you, you can overcome the world, because I have overcome the world.

Overcome the world in what sense? Overcome the world's opposition. Overcome the world's attempt to drag you down into sin. Basically, that's what the world wants to do.

It wants to drive you from Christ and into misbehavior. And you can overcome that. Look what John said over in 1 John 5. 1 John 5, verse 4 and 5 says, For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.

Same phrase. Jesus said, I have overcome the world. Well, why? Because he was begotten of God.

Well, so are we. Whatever is begotten of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world.

Our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world? But he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. He didn't say, who is he who overcomes the world? But Jesus.

Well, Jesus overcomes the world, certainly. But he says, the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, the disciple of Jesus, he overcomes the world too. Why? Because the Spirit of God is given.

The life of Jesus is given to us. Or as Peter puts it in 2 Peter 1, 4, that we become partakers of the divine nature. That's in 2 Peter 1. And verse 4, it says, By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

So it is possible to escape the corruption that is in the world, to overcome the world. How? By having received the divine nature. The divine nature? God's nature? You've received it? Yes, he says, We've been given great and precious promises, that through these we may be partakers of the divine nature.

Peter was in the upper room when he heard these promises Jesus made. And he is affirming to his readers, it's not just for us disciples who are in the upper room. We all have these promises.

We all can become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Jesus did it, and it was the divine nature in him that allowed him to overcome the world. And we have been partakers of the divine nature.

The Holy Spirit imparts to us God's own nature. Being a Christian isn't just signing on to a loyalty to a religious viewpoint, or even to a man, Jesus. It is having him come and transform you with his own supernatural nature, coming in you through the Holy Spirit and making you have the life of God in you.

And whoever is born of God has the life of God in him and overcomes the world, John said. And so Jesus has overcome the world. But you be of good cheer.

Since I've done it, you can do it. The Spirit that I'm sending is going to give you all the

abilities that I had. The works I do, you should do also in greater works.

So whatever I'm able to do, you'll be able to do. And I overcome the world, so cheer up. You can do it too.

The world will tribulate you. You'll have tribulation in the world. But that doesn't sound very encouraging.

Be encouraged. Because in spite of tribulation, you can beat the world. It doesn't mean that you can beat the world in the sense of getting rid of tribulation.

Some people think that overcoming the world means that you defeat all of the trials in the sense that you don't have them anymore. That if the world gets you sick, you can just throw off the sickness. If there's persecution, you just throw off the persecution.

If there's an economic crisis, you can just throw that off and be prosperous in spite of it. Well, if some of those things happen, God can do those things for you. But that's not what it means to overcome the world.

It means that even while you're waiting to be healed, while you're waiting for finances to come in, while you're waiting to be delivered from tribulation, you have that strength, that overcoming nature, that divine nature that overcomes the world so that the world doesn't change you. That's the point. To remain unchanged by the environment because you have internally the divine nature.

This is the difference, of course, between warm-blooded and cold-blooded creatures. Cold-blooded creatures, like fish and frogs and reptiles, their body temperature conforms to the temperature of the environment. They have no inward self-regulating body temperature mechanism.

They just turn whatever temperature the environment is. But warm-blooded creatures have something inside that regulates their temperature. With us, it's 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

And you can be out in 100-degree weather, and if you're healthy and properly cared for, you'll still be 98.6 degrees. If you're in freezing weather, you'll still be 98.6 degrees. Because God has given you an internal control, an internal thermostat that does not succumb to the environmental temperatures.

You may succumb in the sense that you die if you're exposed to extreme temperatures, but that's only because your body can't adjust to them. You know, a fish or a frog can freeze. And some of them can thaw out next spring and still be alive.

Because their bodies adapt to the temperature around them. They have nothing to contribute to their own body temperature. They just absorb it from the environment.

And spiritually speaking, that's how an unregenerate person is. The moral and spiritual climate determines their inward spiritual state. But God gives us his divine nature, so inside we have something that generates a different spiritual state that we can maintain even in an ungodly environment.

The environment doesn't determine our spiritual temperature. Because we can overcome the world. The world is putting all these pressures on us.

But we can walk the opposite direction. We can swim against the tide. And so, that is what Jesus is telling his disciples, encouraging them.

This is the last words he speaks to them on this occasion. Then he's going to pray in chapter 17. We'll have to take that a separate time, of course.