

OpenTheo

Upper Room Discourse (Part 5)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this discourse, Steve Gregg discusses various aspects of the teachings of Jesus, including the promise of the Holy Spirit, the peace available through Him, and the significance of His sacrifice on the cross. He emphasizes that the peace of a Christian is not dependent on external circumstances, but is a result of walking in the Spirit, and can be maintained by prayer and obedience to God. Gregg also suggests that different interpretations of Jesus' sacrifice may exist, but it is essential to focus on how the Bible presents this event.

Transcript

We're going to continue our studies in the Upper Room Discourse. We're in chapter 14 of John, beginning at verse 25, and we'll have to move a little more quickly than we have been. That will, to a certain extent, be not too hard.

It will certainly be difficult, if not impossible, to cover as much as I'd like to cover today. But it will be easier to travel quickly through the material because we've commented already on some of the themes that are going to face us again as we read on. Jesus is in the Upper Room with this long discourse that He's given in this last meeting He had with His disciples prior to His death.

Beginning at verse 25 of John 14, Jesus said, 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, 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'm going away and coming back to you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, I'm 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 commandments, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. Now, in verse 25, Jesus essentially is saying, All the things that you've heard from Me, you've heard directly from My lips while I've been physically present with you so far.

However, there will be things I'll be telling you after I'm gone, but I'll be telling you those differently. I won't be visibly and physically present with you as I am now, but the Holy Spirit that I'm sending will continue to teach you as I've been teaching you, and will remind you of the things I've already said. Now, this promise made to the apostles is no doubt one of the reasons that we can believe in the infallibility of the gospel record of what Jesus said.

Now, Jesus didn't say here that the Holy Spirit would inspire them to write the gospels, but of course, that may be an extension of this thought. Certainly, one of the principal parts of the gospel record, at least of John's gospel and Matthew's and Luke's, to a lesser degree of Mark's, is the contents of Jesus' teaching. Now, it says that the Holy Spirit would remind these men what Jesus had told them, so that, of course, when we read what they wrote about what Jesus said, we assume that they got it right.

The Holy Spirit was inspiring them, reminding them of what Jesus said. No doubt they wrote these things several decades after Jesus was gone from them. Three to four decades later, they wrote these things down, and as far as we know, most of the things Jesus said were not written down much prior to that.

And it's on this basis that sometimes liberal scholars suggest, well, we don't really know for sure how accurate these representations were of what Jesus said. After all, they were written down decades later. They had no doubt been shaped in the memories of the disciples by the development of Christian doctrine in the succeeding decades.

And as, you know, the church had to develop its ideas, it no doubt began to read the teachings of Jesus back through the lens of its developed theology and put words into his mouth that maybe weren't there, put a spin on them, that had not been intended by Jesus. And that's where the liberals come off doing something like this Jesus seminar, trying to say, now we've got to try to recover the original words of Jesus and deliver them from the bondage of the traditional ideas of the church that were imposed upon them at the time the Gospels were written. But, you see, these people are ignoring or just discrediting this statement of Jesus to his disciples that the Holy Spirit would remind them of everything Jesus said.

Therefore, it doesn't matter if it was a decade or ten decades afterwards, if these men had still been alive, the Holy Spirit would be the one responsible for seeing to it that they remembered what Jesus said. Now, when we read sometimes the same teaching of Jesus or the same statement of Jesus in different Gospels appearing in different words from each other, for example, Luke and Matthew or Mark might record a statement of Jesus in different words than one of the other Gospels records the same statement. Some might

say, well, there is a flub here somewhere that the Holy Spirit didn't remind one of them as accurately as he reminded the other because they didn't put it down the same words.

But to say that the disciples would be reminded of what Jesus said doesn't mean that they were under obligation when they finally wrote them down to write down the exact words Jesus spoke. For instance, they wrote in Greek and Jesus spoke in Aramaic. Therefore, they didn't write down the exact Aramaic words.

They had to translate them into Greek. And two translations of the same statement into the same language can be different from each other depending on how the translator chooses his words. Furthermore, there's nothing that would preclude the disciples taking the liberty under Christ to clarify or paraphrase to a certain extent what Jesus had said.

If they remembered what he had said and gave an accurate paraphrase of it, that they did not lose the meaning, that would be within their rights to do it, seems to me. And therefore, when they say, well, Jesus said this, and they quote him, it need not necessarily mean that they were quoting his exact words. Just as if I had a long conversation with my parents and my wife asked me afterwards, what did your parents say? I say, oh, they said everything's fine and my brother's car that was stolen has been recovered by the law enforcement officers and so forth and tell them those things.

My wife does not have to assume that I'm quoting their exact words even though I'm saying that they said those things. I can digest the conversation into a short statement or paraphrase it as long as I'm giving the accurate information. And therefore, the difference in the way that the gospel writers render a given statement of Jesus does not in any sense mean that one of them or both were not receiving revelation or insight or supernatural remembrance through the Holy Spirit, but that they may not have intended to give a word-for-word rendering.

And besides, they had to translate from one language into another, and that in itself allows for a certain flexibility in the wording of the statement. So anyway, this verse is an important one for credentialing the writings of the apostles about the teachings of Jesus because Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would bring to remembrance everything he said. Now, does this apply to others besides the apostles? Hard to say, because he says in the end of verse 26 that he will bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Obviously, it's addressing people who Jesus had spoken to and said these things already, the apostles, no doubt. We were not here. He hadn't said these things to us.

Therefore, there's no indication that he's saying that this is a general promise to all people. Nonetheless, many things that Jesus promised the apostles, though they may not be universal in application to all Christians, they can spill over, if it's the will of God to do so, to things that he will do with other Christians besides the apostles. As I pointed out,

in the book of Acts, it was normally the apostles who did signs and wonders, but on occasion, God did supernatural things through others, like Stephen and Philip.

It wasn't the norm, as near as we can tell from the record, but God is not in a box, and whenever it's his will to do so, he can do the same kind of thing through a non-apostle as he promised to do through the apostles. It has been my experience and the experience of many that I've known who have testified to this, that when they were sharing the gospel with somebody, that the Holy Spirit would bring to mind, bring to remembrance, scriptures that they had read and forgotten or that they had previously not had in mind and they didn't remember ever memorizing, but it came to mind. Or even in some cases, I've heard people testify that while they're witnessing, scripture would come to their mind that they don't even remember ever reading, and they later found it in the scriptures, but the Holy Spirit brought it to their remembrance.

So while I would say that there is an absolute promise to this effect given to the apostles, and we cannot necessarily claim that every time we are trying to recall something Jesus said, that the Holy Spirit is going to make sure we remember it right, that still does not mean that he can't do that kind of thing with us, and I believe he still does with individuals. So that's the way I approach promises that Jesus made to the apostles. I would say promises he made to the apostles are absolutely true and universally true in their case.

And in our case, it's a matter of the will of God, whether he wants to do a similar thing to somebody to whom he has not promised it or not. That's his business. Obviously, if he wants to do this through the apostles, it must be the kind of thing that God likes to do, or else why would he promise to do it through the apostles? And if he likes to do this kind of thing, he might well do it through some who are not apostles as well.

I believe that the Holy Spirit has - I'll just say this. The Holy Spirit is the helper of all of us. When Jesus said, I'm sending you another helper, and when the Holy Spirit was sent, it was not simply the 12 who received the Holy Spirit.

It was 120 in the upper room. And as near as we can tell from the remaining part of the writings of the New Testament, it would appear that all Christians are expected to have this helper, though the work of the helper may not be exactly the same in every person's case. But in Romans chapter 8, which is certainly written to the church at large or as a whole, to Christians generally, he says, Paul says in Romans 8, 26, likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses.

Now, Jesus said the Spirit was coming to the apostles as a helper. Paul says, speaking to Christians in general, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. And he goes on to give an example of one way that the Holy Spirit does this.

For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself makes

intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Now, this is not something that applies to apostles merely, but to Christians generally.

The Holy Spirit praying through us, revealing to us what must be prayed is a function that can happen to all Christians. And that when he says the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, certainly that would suggest that Christians in general, not just the apostles, can expect revelatory aid from the Holy Spirit in situations where that's called for. So we don't want to put God in a box even if we suggest that certain promises may have applied specifically to the apostles.

This doesn't mean that God is unable to manifest the same kind of things in any age through anyone he wishes. But it does mean that we might not in every case be able to claim this kind of infallibility that the apostles, I think, could claim. That's where there's a difference, I think.

Now, Jesus said in verse 27, 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.

Now, he had told them in the opening verse of this chapter to not let their heart be troubled. And now he gives them something to replace their fear and their trouble. He says, I give you peace.

Now, it would appear that they did not receive this peace at the moment that he spoke it. When he says, my peace I leave with you, it doesn't mean that from that moment on they had it. Because it's quite clear they didn't.

Later that night, when Jesus was arrested, they all fled. Peter himself later on nervously denied the Lord three times. This certainly was fear on his part.

His heart was troubled. I believe that the peace that he gave to them, of course, was made available through the Holy Spirit. And he didn't give them the Holy Spirit at this time when he was announcing that he would.

However, a few chapters later, after he rose from the dead, in John chapter 20, notice this in verses 21 and 22. Then Jesus said to them again, Peace to you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. Therefore, he imparted the Holy Spirit to them and his peace in the upper room the night after he rose from the dead. And he only was predicting it here.

Just as he was predicting in the previous verses in John 14 that he was going to send the Spirit, he didn't send the Spirit at that moment. And likewise, when he says, I'm leaving

you with my peace, he didn't mean at this moment. He gave them his peace later.

And after that, we don't really read of them being nervous or fearful. We see them being very bold throughout the rest of the record in the book of Acts about them. So he did give them his peace.

Now, the peace he had, he says, is not like the peace the world gives. Now, the peace that the world gives is conditioned upon circumstance. There are people in the world who experience a peaceful existence and no doubt a certain degree of tranquility inwardly.

I meet these people from time to time and they're not Christians. I wonder about it. How can this person be so tranquil? I mean, I have peace, but I know why I have peace.

I have peace because I know who holds the future. I know that God is with me. I know that there's nothing that's ever going to face me that God is not able to help me go through faithfully and successfully.

But these people don't have any such assurance. How can they possibly have peace? And I think that the world gives peace conditioned upon the perception of calamity or danger. I mean, if a person does not perceive any danger, there's nothing to occasion fear or trembling in them.

And obviously, many times people who are not saved live without fear, either because there is no current danger or no foreseeable danger in their life, although even some of them don't have peace even then. There are some people who manufacture paranoid thoughts of imagined dangers and don't have peace even when they're in a tranquil situation, but not everyone's that way. Some people, when they're in tranquil situations, have tranquil inner peace.

However, as it says in the Old Testament, there is no peace for the wicked. Certainly, if a person is saying, peace, peace, and there is no peace, they're living in self-deception. The person who is not at peace with God because he's a sinner and unforgiven, yet he is experiencing inward peace, is simply ignoring the fact.

He's oblivious to the fact that he's not at peace with God and that the wrath of God abides upon him. A revelation of that truth to his heart would certainly remove his peace. But many people have learned to cope with an uncertain future by simply adopting an optimistic outlook, and they do have peace.

However, the peace that Jesus gives is not like the peace that worldly people have, which is based on circumstances. Many testimonies from church history have shown, and I hope your own testimony also confirms, that the peace that a Christian has is not conditioned on circumstance. Now, we are, of course, subject to the same temptations as the world is with reference to fear, worry, anxiety.

And if we're not walking in the Spirit, there is, of course, the possibility that we will lack this peace. However, Paul said in Galatians 5.22, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, and others. But inward peace is a fruit of walking in the Spirit.

And just as we can tell somebody that if they're not loving, it is because they're not walking in the Spirit, we can also say if they're not at peace, it's because they're not walking in the Spirit. And, of course, that has a lot to do with the way we would counsel somebody who's experiencing anxiety or panic or other things like that. Walking in the Spirit provides a supernatural peace.

And if some people say, but some people's anxiety attacks are occasioned by a physiological problem, that their brain registers suffocation much more quickly than ours do, so that if they hyperventilate or if they hold their breath a little longer than they should, this lack of oxygen triggers the panic that most of us would feel if we felt like we were suffocating. There would be a natural sense of panic. Doctors are now saying that probably these panic attacks are caused by a sense that suffocation is occurring.

But you know what? To me, it is questionable whether a Christian needs to panic even if they sense they are suffocating. Why should they fear death? I've been in situations that appeared to be, it appeared that death was imminent or at least very likely, usually on plane flights, but in other situations as well, in situations where I could easily have succumbed to being nervous, but the peace of God did not, it prevented me from being nervous and fearful. I would imagine that although there is a natural instinct to panic, if you feel like, you know, if something startles you or if you feel like you're suffocating, there would be a natural instinct to panic, it seems to me that a Christian could just say, well, hey, what if I panic? What if I perish? What if I suffocate? Big deal.

I mean, I'm going to die sometime. If this is the time, come Lord Jesus, you know, receive my spirit. And it seems to me that refocusing on Christ and putting our faith in Him again would remove panic, and even in such a case as that.

My own wife used to experience something like panic attacks. I don't know, we never, of course, have been to a psychologist or psychiatrist, so we've never been diagnosed that way. But it was usually associated with claustrophobia, and her father had similar problems until he overcame it too.

And a lot of times it was hard for Kristen to travel with me on airplanes, because at times, unpredictably, she'd be seized with something that made her just want to, you know, jump out, you know, because of the tightness of the quarters or whatever. And we never did figure out what it was, but once when I was talking to her, I said, well, why don't you just, at those times, just say, well, what's the worst thing that could happen? I could die. Well, what's wrong with that? Dying's okay, isn't it? And next time we were in an airplane, she began to be tempted with this panic thing, and she reminded herself of those very truths, really, the truth makes you free, and it dissipated, it went away.

Panic and fear and anxiety, they are responses that are triggered, perhaps by circumstance, but controlled by choice, in my opinion. And the person who chooses to reflect on Christ, to focus on the truth, to walk in the Spirit, will overcome such things. Now, I'm not saying there aren't physiological factors that may trigger this in someone, but triggering is one thing.

Managing it is another thing, and I do believe you can overcome any fear by simply recalling the promises of God, putting your faith in them, and just submitting yourself to God, and letting His Holy Spirit produce and maintain a peaceful, tranquil state of heart. Some people, of course, have more habits of fearfulness than others, and therefore it may be a little harder for some to overcome than others, just like someone who's got a habit of drinking too much coffee. He may have a harder time quitting coffee than people who don't have that habit.

But there's a lot of things that can make it harder for one person than for another to overcome a particular problem, but that doesn't change the fact that all behaviors and all spiritual and mental disorders are spiritual in nature and can be resolved. I mean, if a person is experiencing depression, how can that be when the fruit of the Spirit is joy? If a person is experiencing anxiety, how can that be if the fruit of the Spirit is peace? If a person has anger and hate problems, how can that be if the fruit of the Spirit is love? He that is angry at his brother is a murderer, and no murderer has eternal life inviting him. If he loves his brother, he won't be angry at him.

Now, what I'm saying is that Christians experience all of these negative emotions when they're not walking in the Spirit. But when Jesus breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit, peace I give unto you, along with the Spirit's domination of the personality come this peace and other fruit, which when we are yielded to the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, these will be the dominant characteristics in our soul, in our temperament. And there will be temptations toward wrong emotions, just like there are temptations toward wrong behavior.

But responding by walking in the Spirit removes all that. And it's an amazing thing how God gives us a peace in a situation which would cause any worldly person to have no such peace. I remember when my second wife was killed, that the peace of God swept over me.

I usually describe it as the grace of God, and I believe both ways of describing it are correct. The grace of God enveloped me in that situation and gave me complete peace, the Holy Spirit. It just gave me peace, and I never experienced anything other than peace about it.

Some people say, well, when you go through a crisis like this, you go through denial, and you go through shock and stuff, and after a while it dawns on you, then you have to go through resolving the conflict and the problem and so forth. I never came out of shock, I

guess, 12, 13 years later, 14 years later now. If it's shock, long live shock, as far as I'm concerned.

But long live denial, because I've never known anything but the peace of God since that event. Never went through any of the things that they say you're supposed to go through when you go through trials like that. But I just attribute it to the grace of God and the peace of God.

It's a peace of God, Peter said, that surpasses understanding. And it keeps our, not Peter, that's not Peter. Peter talked about joy and expression.

I keep getting him confused with Paul in Philippians 4. Philippians 4 said, the peace of God is ours, and it passes understanding. But not automatically. You don't automatically walk in peace at all times, only as you walk in the Spirit.

And Philippians 4 says this. In Philippians 4, 6 and 7, it says, be anxious for nothing. That is, don't entertain anxiety or anxious thoughts.

But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. The peace of God will keep you, keep your heart and your mind. But not automatically.

It's if instead of choosing anxiety in a situation which might tempt you to be anxious, choose to pray and to cast your burden on the Lord and be thankful, and the peace of God will maintain. You see, part of walking in the Spirit is praying instead of worrying. Part of walking in the Spirit is being thankful.

Part of walking in the Spirit is doing what God says to do. And when He says, don't be anxious, then there's no way you're going to walk in the Spirit while you're refusing to stop being anxious. You've got to stop being anxious first.

I mean, you've got to decide not to be anxious and decide to obey God. Of course, the ability to do so is His to give. Anyway, that's why Jesus said the peace He gives is not like the world gives.

It surpasses understanding. When a worldly person is at peace, it's not surprising, because usually there are circumstances or their refusal to acknowledge the circumstances. I mean, a lot of times they're just refusing to accept what's the crisis.

They have what appears to be a peace, but it's not a peace that really survives when they realize there is a crisis. But our peace is to be unruffled if you walk in the Spirit. It's different, a different species.

Verse 28, John 14, 28, Now here, going away and coming back to you seems to be a

reference not to His going to the cross, into the grave, and then coming back in the resurrection, because He said He's going to the Father. And He didn't go to the Father in those days between His death and resurrection. At least, I don't think He did.

I know some Christian teachers who do. A friend of mine who used to be the director of all the SBSs for YWAM, he's got a doctorate in theology and stuff. He's a smart guy and knows the Bible real well, almost as well as I know it.

Now, the reason I say that is I certainly would have guessed that he knows it better than I do. When I first met him, it was in Honolulu. He was teaching in the Honolulu base and I was too.

And we were teaching different schools in the same base at the same time. And I taught the Friday night meeting. But during the week, before he heard me teach, he advised me, you ought to go and study Greek.

It will really give you more credibility when you teach. Go learn Greek and Hebrew and stuff, because he reads Greek and Hebrew. And I said, yeah, I'd really like to.

I just don't have the opportunity right now. I'd love to be able to read those. And he said, well, I'd really encourage you to do that.

And then that Friday night I taught. I don't even remember what I taught on. But I taught on something.

And he came up to me afterwards. He said, well, you know, remember what I said about reading Greek and Hebrew? He says, in your case, I don't know that you need to go and learn. I think you're doing pretty well just with the English text.

But then, you know, this doesn't seem very humble for me to say this, but I might as well. Who else is going to say it about me, right? I went to his base after that, some months later, and taught for a few days. And he and his wife sat in the classes.

And he came up to me in my hospitality room afterwards. And he said, you know, Steve, I've always thought that I've never met a teacher who knew the English text of the Bible as well as I do, he said. But he says, I think you do.

And he said, while you were teaching, my wife nudged me and said, honey, I think you've met your match. So that's nice. He didn't say I'm better.

And I'm not. I'm not better. But it's nice to know.

I mean, a guy who goes and gets a PhD doesn't really necessarily have an advantage over someone who doesn't. You just study your Bible. And, you know, you don't need instructors necessarily.

You study your Bible. You didn't get the same advantage as formal education, which means you don't need this school. What are you doing here? Get out of here.

No, honestly, you know, I brought him up because I wanted to say that I respect his knowledge of the Bible. He's a good theologian. And he does believe that Jesus went into heaven during those three days.

He and I once had a long talk about that. And we left still disagreeing. But but it was interesting.

He believes that when Jesus said to the thief on the cross today, you'll be with me in paradise, that paradise has got to be identified with heaven. Because Paul in Second Corinthians, Chapter 12, said that he knew a man about 14 years ago who was caught up in heaven, even into paradise. So Paul uses the words heaven and paradise as synonyms in Second Corinthians 12.

And therefore, when Jesus said you'll be with me in paradise, that means he's went to heaven. Now, one of the problems with that, besides the fact that the Bible seems to say elsewhere that Jesus went to Hades, is the fact that when Jesus rose from the dead and Mary Magdalene saw him, he said, don't cling to me for I've not yet ascended to my father. So, I mean, I'm not sure how to understand.

I think I know how that can be understood. And but if I understand that correctly, it seems to say he had not in those days that he was buried. He had not ascended to his father who had yet to do that.

So anyway, what I'm saying here is this other teacher, his view is that when he said, I'm going away and I'm coming back to you, you should rejoice because I'm going to the father, that that probably I'm sure his view would be that that would be when Jesus was crucified and he came back in the resurrection, in his own resurrection, that is three days later. And he went to the father in between time. My understanding and that of I think most most evangelical teachers and commentators I'd be aware of would say, no, he didn't go to the father during those three days.

But he of course, when he ascended into heaven 40 days later, he then he went to the father. And so his going away here seems to be his ascension. And his coming back would appear to be his second coming.

Yeah. I believe that paradise is not a word that is always associated with heaven. In the Old Testament, it's even associated with the Garden of Eden.

And my thought is that paradise in the Bible is just as much of a generic kind of a term that can apply to a lot of different situations, just like it is in our modern language. I mean, we talk about Hawaii being like paradise. We might say the same thing about Tahiti.

If we went there or some other places, we're not. If I say when I come back from Hawaii a few weeks from now and say, well, I spent the last couple of weeks in paradise. You probably will not assume that they have now given the name, the Hawaiian Islands, the name paradise.

You realize that paradise is sort of a way of speaking about a whole class of different places, you know, that are. Well, the word paradise is a Persian word. It means.

Well, I think that's even going to come up in Ezekiel lectures yet. But it's a Persian word that means a pleasure park or a beautiful garden or something like that. So it's I think that paradise is used in more than one kind of situation.

In the Bible, it's used of it's used of the Garden of Eden. It's used of heaven. It's used, I think, when you said you'll be with me in paradise, I think where they went was to Abraham's bosom, which Jesus talks about in another place.

I think Jesus is equating that with paradise. Since it's in contrast to the flames that the rich man was in. Yeah.

Until his ascension. Yeah. To touch him.

Yeah, there's the there's a number of views about this. And one that I've heard a great deal is I think what you're suggesting, that when Jesus said to Mary, don't touch me because I've not yet ascended to the father. And yet later that same day, he allowed the other women to grab his feet and he invited Thomas eight days later to touch him.

And he allowed himself to be touched on several occasions shortly after this. Why didn't he let Mary touch him? And, you know, they say, well, it's because he had to ascend to the father. And so he must, they say, have ascended to the father between morning when he saw Mary.

And later that morning, when he let the women touch him, he must have made a quick trip to heaven and back in that time. Now, that is not impossible because Jesus kept kind of beaming in and beaming out that whole 40 days. And where he was when he wasn't visible to them, we don't know.

Maybe he was in heaven during those times. We're not told. It might be a fair inference.

But his words to Mary Magdalene, I've understood somewhat differently. I think she was actually holding on to the text doesn't say so. But when he said, do not touch me, the word touch in the Greek can be in modern translations is usually translated cling to.

And he's saying, don't cling to me for I have yet to send to my father. I personally think he's referring to the fact that he was going to 40 days after that, ascend to his father and be around no more. And that she needs to not cling to him, not not to not try to detain

him.

See, no doubt her thinking was, well, she never expected him to be crucified in the first place. And once he was, she thought she'd lost him forever. And now he's back.

Yes, for sure. Her thinking, no doubt, was, hey, now I've got you back. I'm never going to let you get away again.

He says, now, wait a minute. Don't hang on. I'm going to go away again.

I've got I have yet to go to my father. And I think his ascending to his father that he referred to, there was probably his ascension, which was still about six weeks off at the time he said it. But he wanted her to be aware that he wasn't here to stay.

He wasn't back to stay at this point. I've always interpreted his words that way, though. There's a lot of a lot of scholars and stuff who would interpret the other way that he was.

He had to, you know, from after seeing her, he actually made a quick ascension into heaven. Some would say that's when he, you know, sprinkled his blood on the mercy seat and the Holy of Holies and so forth. That his when he resurrected from the dead, it wasn't actually the complete redemption was not really complete until he ascended to heaven, sprinkled his blood up there.

And Mary happened to catch him before he made that trip. But he got back in time for the women to touch him and others to touch him later. I, I, I don't think there's very much in support of that view.

But then again, there's not there's not much other than the statement itself to guide us in our thinking on it. But I think that when he speaks about ascending to his father, he is talking about going to sit the right hand of God, which he did at his ascension. I will come to you.

The Holy Spirit. OK. Could his mention of return in verse 28 be a reference to the Holy Spirit coming back? And it's entirely possible because, as I pointed out in verse 18, I think that when he says, I will come to you, he was speaking of the coming of the spirit.

That's what I said at the beginning is kind of hard to know. He does make reference to going away in more than one sense in the passage. And he also talks about coming again in what I think is more than one sense.

You know, when he says in chapter 14, verse three, if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself. Personally, I think that I will come again as a reference to a second coming. Although I guess someone could make that the Pentecost or something else if they wanted to.

But I guess I'm just having to get there's times when you kind of have to go on your

instincts and you can't be sure you're right. But my instincts at this point incline me to think that he's talking about a second coming in some of those cases and not in other cases, depending on the context. But, Corey, you're correct.

He could be saying that here because he has just been speaking about the Holy Spirit. Now, his statement at the end of verse 28, my father is greater than I. And that has been the occasion for much Aryanism. Aryanism is the ancient heresy that denied that Jesus is God in the flesh and, of course, lives on in some cults today.

And even among some people who aren't attached to any cult, I got a letter from somebody today whom I know. I don't know him well. He's not exactly a friend or anything.

I just know him. And his letter suggested that he kind of holds to Aryan views about Christ, although he's not a member of a cult. He's kind of a renegade Christian.

So there are some people out there regarding themselves to be Christians who also hold the view that Jesus is not God. And this is one of the verses that is most commonly brought up to support that notion. Jesus said the Father is greater than I. Well, that's true.

And that doesn't give a Trinitarian any problem at all. Because we realize, based on what it says in Philippians chapter two, that Jesus, though he existed in the form of God, he voluntarily emptied himself of all prestige and privilege and took on himself the form of a servant and a man. And he humbled himself to the point of death.

He made himself a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, it says in Hebrews chapter two. Now, if he made himself lower and he emptied himself to take on that form, it means that he originally was not lower. He originally was in the form of God.

He originally was, in fact, equal with and in the form of God and not at all inferior to God the Father. But he voluntarily took a form that made him subject to the Father when he became a human being. He chose to lay aside his divine privileges and live as a human being and to be subject not only to God, but even to the angels, to be at their mercy.

And so during his earthly life, Jesus had assumed a form that was indeed lesser than that of his Father. It was not something he was compelled to do. He did it voluntarily because, in fact, he was equal and almost identical, as near as we can tell, to the Father before he came to earth.

But his coming to earth was a voluntary self-humbling, self-reducing. For example, as Jesus spoke these words, the Father was in all places at all times, but Jesus was not. To inhabit a human body, Jesus had had to surrender his omnipresence.

And we've seen on other occasions in the Gospels that while he was on earth, Jesus had

surrendered, given up temporarily at least, his omniscience and his omnipotence. That's his ability to know all things and do all things. He made himself subject to the Father.

That's a position he placed himself in. And so it's quite fitting for him to say at this point, while he's on earth, the Father is greater than I. I've positioned myself lower than him. I am not omnipresent as he is.

I'm not omniscient as he is. He is superior to me. Not superior so much in rank or in essence, but superior in terms of privilege at that moment.

However, he says, you should be glad that I'm going back there. Why? The implication is, I think the implication is because now I'm going to recover those privileges that the Father knows now, but which I have temporarily laid aside. When I go back to the Father, I'm going to recover the privilege and the glory that I had before.

We will read in his prayer in chapter 17, which we won't take the time to look at now, but basically in that prayer he's going to say, Father, give me the glory again that I had with you before. He shared in the glory of God before he came to earth. He laid it aside briefly when he came to earth and then he recovered it when he went back.

So anyway, I do believe there remained perpetually a distinction between Jesus and the Father in that he is at the right hand of the Father and that he is forever known as the Son of God. But in terms of the power and authority and prestige and privilege and glory and so forth, he's equal with his Father since he's gone back there. And so he's saying, you should be glad for me that I'm going back to the Father because what I'm going to be like is like him and he's greater than I am now.

That means I'll be better off than I am now. That's how I understand his meaning. No doubt other people have different impressions about it.

Verse 29, and now I have told you before it comes that when it does come to pass, you may believe. We've already looked through all the times in the discourse when he made that statement. He predicts it so that they would recognize after the fulfillment that he had predicted it and had known and therefore must have been divine and not mere human.

I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming and he has nothing in me. Now, the ruler of this world, as we've mentioned earlier, is the devil. And he was coming.

Now, the devil isn't always around. It may be that demons are always around, but I'm not sure the Bible even tells us that to be so. I've always had the impression that there's enough demons in the world to be assigned to everybody.

You know, like there's guardian angels. There might be, in a sense, guardian demons

assigned by the devil to every person. I don't know that to be true.

The Bible doesn't say that. And I've always kind of assumed that in a room like this, there'd be many demons out there trying to do us harm. But the guardian angels are holding them back.

I mean, there's great warfare going on right here in the room. And there may be. I don't know if there is or not.

All I can say is I've come to realize the Bible doesn't really tell us that the demons are always around. But even if they are, even if you never go anywhere without a demon stalking you, you know, the devil himself certainly isn't always around, not personally so. And Jesus indicated the ruler of this world was coming, which means that he wasn't there at the moment.

The devil is not omnipresent. You remember when the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness after three temptations that are recorded, it says in the devil left him for a convenient opportunity or for another convenient time or for a season, it says in the King James, the devil left him for a while and now the devil is coming back. I don't think the devil had been away from Jesus all this time.

I think there had been occasions when the devil had made other attempts upon him. For instance, the devil had come and inhabited Judas. In fact, it may be, in fact, in the person of Judas that the devil was coming.

That's why I'm not going to be longer with you, because the ruler of this world is coming. He happens to be inhabiting somebody that we're going to meet up with later tonight. Judas Iscariot.

After all, when Jesus told the disciples back in verse 17 of this chapter that they knew the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit was with them. I'm pointing out when we talk about that verse that he may well have met in the person of Jesus. The Holy Spirit was in Jesus.

Therefore, since Jesus was with them, they knew the Holy Spirit with them manifested in him. It's possible when you said the devil is coming that we've already read that the devil filled Judas's heart. He's just referring to Judas coming and the devil with him.

In any case, he says the devil doesn't have anything on me. He has nothing in me, which is something we can also say in a sense most of the time. If we're walking in cleanness of conscience before the Lord, we can say the same thing.

The devil has nothing on me. That doesn't mean that we are as perfect and flawless as Jesus is, but we are forgiven through him. His righteousness is imputed to us, and therefore there is a sense in which the devil can't really get his hooks in us unless we

give him place.

Paul says in Ephesians 4, don't let the sun go down on your anger, neither give place to the devil. A Christian ought not to give place to the devil because if he gives place, the devil can have something on you. That, of course, is in Ephesians 4, 26 and 27.

Likewise, in 1 John 5, verse 18, 1 John 5, 18 says, We know that whoever is born of God does not sin, but he who has been born of God keeps himself. There's another reading that just says keeps him. We won't talk about that textual problem right now, but we'll just keep it like this.

He that has been born of God keeps himself, and that wicked one does not touch him. The devil has nothing in you unless you don't keep yourself in the love of God. Jude says keep yourself in the love of God.

If you keep yourself, you can be immune from the devil, even so much as touching you. Now, touching you, I think, has to do with touching your spirit, interfering with your security in Christ. The reason I say that is because Job, certainly the devil had nothing on Job either.

He was looking to get something on him, but he couldn't get anything on him, and God wouldn't let the devil touch him. But at a certain point, God did. God removed the hedge, but not because Job had some sin or had done anything wrong.

Job had not stopped keeping himself. The devil can touch you physically, I believe, in my opinion, if God lets him do it. But he can't touch your spirit.

He can't make you sin. If you do sin, though, if you don't keep yourself pure, if you do give place to the devil, then, of course, you can't make exactly the same claim Jesus did when Jesus said, The devil has nothing on me. Because there are times when the devil does have something on you.

You've sinned and not repented. But, of course, Christians have a habit of when they sin, they repent. And therefore, it should never be said for any protracted period of time that the devil could have any kind of advantage in your life.

Now, Jesus, of course, had never sinned. Therefore, the devil couldn't nail him, couldn't pin anything on him. Now, what's that got to do with what Jesus said about not being in the world? I think what he's saying is this.

I'm not going to be longer much with you because it is implied I'm going to die. I'm going to be crucified. Now, the fact that I die might give you the wrong impression.

It might give the impression that the devil found sin in me because the wages of sin is death, of course. And the soul that sins, it shall die. And if Jesus died, some might feel

like, Well, I guess he went the way of all sinners.

You know, he died. But he says, No, the devil doesn't have any grounds for this. The devil has nothing on me.

I've not sinned. The reason I'm going to the Father, he says in verse 31, is so that the world may know I'm going to go to the cross, so that the world might know that I love the Father. I'm going to demonstrate by my dying on the cross that I love the Father.

You know, we usually talk about Jesus' death on the cross as the proof that he loved us. Actually, Paul indicates, and so does John, that Jesus' death on the cross demonstrates God's love for us. But I don't recall.

I mean, if I searched my concordance more, I might find an exception. But I don't think so. I don't know that there's a place at the bottom that says Jesus went to the cross because he loved us.

And I'm not trying to deny that he does. I'm just trying to say that the focus of Scripture is perhaps different than what we often make it. Jesus went to the cross because his Father loved us and wanted him to.

And Jesus loved the Father, so he did what his Father wanted him to do. I'm not trying to deny that Jesus loves us. I'm just trying to say that it was an act of love.