

# OpenTheo

## Upper Room Discourse (Part 1)



### **The Life and Teachings of Christ** - Steve Gregg

In his discourse to his disciples, Jesus repeatedly speaks about his imminent departure and return, promising to send the Holy Spirit as a Helper and emphasizing duties and responsibilities for his apostles. He warns against being too attached to the world and calls for obedience to his commandments. The purpose of his discourse is to prevent his disciples from stumbling and to leave them with peace and comfort despite the forthcoming hard times, with trust in God and Jesus necessary for lasting faith.

### **Transcript**

Let's turn to John Chapter 14 and Jesus is still in the Upper Room in this chapter and in... Well, it's not so clear whether he's still in the Upper Room in chapters 15 and 16, although all of these chapters taken together are called the Upper Room Discourse. It would appear to be an unbroken discourse because there are certain ideas that recur all the way through chapters 14, 15, and 16. Actually, it begins earlier than that in chapter 13 around verse 31.

I think John 13, 31 is where we would have to place the beginning of what would be properly called the Upper Room Discourse. Prior to that, Jesus has been sitting at the table taking the Passover meal with his disciples. He announced that one was going to betray him and then Judas went out into the night.

And then at chapter 13, 31, Jesus began to announce that he was going to be gone soon. In verse 33, for example, he said, Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek me and as I said to the Jews, where I'm going you cannot come.

So now I say to you, namely that where he's going they cannot at this time come. Then he says, A new commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

And then Peter asked where Jesus was going and said that he'd be willing to go anywhere Jesus went even if it would cost him his life. And Jesus gave him the bad news there that before the cock would crow the next morning, he, Peter, would deny Jesus

three times. Now the discourse continues in chapter 14.

Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in me.

In my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am there you may be also. And where I go you know and the way you know. Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going and how can we know the way? Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth and the life.

No one comes to the father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my father also. And from now on you know him and have seen him.

Philip said to him, Lord, show us the father and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long and yet have you not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the father. So how can you say show us the father? Do you not believe that I am in the father and the father in me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the father who dwells in me does the works.

Believe me that I am in the father and the father in me or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves. Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will also do. And greater works than these will he do because I go to my father.

And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the father may be glorified in the son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, keep my commandments and I will pray the father and he will give you another helper, that he may abide with you forever, even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

But you know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you a little while longer and the world will see me no more.

But you will see me because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in my father and you in me and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me.

And he who loves me will be loved by my father and I will love him and manifest myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus answered and said to him, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words and the word which you hear is not mine, but the father's who sent me.

These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you.

My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

You have heard me say to you, I am going away and coming back to you. If you loved me, you would rejoice because I said I am going to the father, for my father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming and he has nothing in me.

But that the world may know that I love the father, and as the father gave me commandments, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. And that last line, of course, gives the impression that at that moment they rose from the table and left the room.

Though he continues to speak for two more chapters, and then prays in chapter 17, and the exact location of chapters 15, 16, and 17 is nowhere identified, it seems like there is no break in the conversation. So they may have begun to get up and clear the table or whatever, while Jesus continued to talk, or else they may have gone out of the room, and he may have given the rest of the discourse as they walked away. We don't know, and I don't suppose we could ever really, I don't know that it would make much difference if we did know, so we'll just have to remain unsure about that.

Excuse me. Now, there are several things in this chapter which set the tone for the entire discourse. In fact, the chapters 14, 15, and 16, and including those last few verses of chapter 13 as well, the study of this discourse, the Upper Room Discourse, is a little bit like the study of Isaiah or some prophet like that, or maybe of the Book of Proverbs, which keeps returning to the same themes over and over again, or James.

Now, there are a few major themes that come up again and again in the discourse that we have here, and virtually all of those themes are found in chapter 14 and recur in the following two chapters. I want to go through this verse by verse, but let me first of all identify for you the recurring themes that will be seen as we go through this discourse. First of all, of course, his announcement that he's going away from them.

That was made initially, as we saw in chapter 13, in verse 33, where he said, Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek me, and as I said to the Jews, where I'm going you cannot come, so now I say to you. Also in verse 36, Jesus said, Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterward.

A very cryptic remark. The disciples didn't understand where it was that he was going. Peter thought, if he was courageous enough, he might be allowed to go with Jesus there.

Even if it was a death-defying trek, even if he was going to some place of great danger, Peter said, I'm willing even to die for you if that's what it takes. Well, it's hard to say exactly where Jesus was going. Now, one thing that recurs throughout the entire discourse are repeated references to Jesus being taken away from them or going away from them, and also repeated references to him coming back to them.

And it's not at all clear in many of the passages which going away he had in mind. For example, we might be inclined to think of his going away into heaven. That's where he is now.

He's away from us now, and he's in heaven. In which case, he would be talking about his ascension. However, there was a going away from them that he had to prepare them for prior to that, and that was his going away to the grave.

He was going to be gone from them for a few days. This was going to take them quite by surprise, and it was going to be a great shock to them. And it's a good possibility that that's the going away that he means.

Now, when he said to Peter, you can't follow me now, but you'll follow me later, it either means that, Peter, I'm going to the cross. You'll later have your own cross. In fact, traditionally, Peter did die on a cross as well.

You'll follow me in this same path of the cross in due time. I'm going the way of the cross. You can't do that right now, but you will later on.

Or, of course, if he's talking about his ascension, he's talking about going away into heaven. In which case, Peter's following him there later would be after Peter died. Like every other Christian, he went to be with the Lord in heaven.

Either one could be meant. And it even gets more confusing when you begin to look at the passages where Jesus talks about coming back. When he says, I'm going to come to you.

Now, some of the passages seem to have a clear reference to the second coming of Christ. I say they seem to, and traditionally, we've understood them to be references to the second coming of Christ. And I have every reason to believe that some of them do refer to the second coming of Christ.

But the matter is blurred a considerable amount by the fact that he talks about coming back to them in another respect or two. For example, in verse 33, he says, you're going to seek me, and I said to you, you can't come. He afterwards says in chapter 14, verse 1, or verse 2, I go to prepare a place for you.

We usually understand that to be a reference to his ascension. And in verse 3, if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself. Now, that is most

naturally to our minds and our frame of reference, a reference to his second coming.

However, when he says in verse 18, for example, I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you. That's not at all clear whether he's talking about the second coming there, because he has just said in verse 16, chapter 14, verse 16, and I will pray the Father, and he will give you another helper that he may abide with you forever. And he said in verse 18, I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you.

Many have understood this to mean I will come to you in the form of the Holy Spirit. And that would seem to be borne out by the fact that Judas said in verse 22, not a scare hit, how are you going to manifest yourself to us and not to the world? And Jesus said in verse 23, if anyone loves me, he'll keep my word, my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Obviously not a reference to the second coming of Christ, but the Father and the Son coming to the believer in the form of the Holy Spirit, in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Those who love Jesus and keep his words will be loved by him, and they, the Father and the Son, will come and make their home with him, it says in verse 23. Which does not appear to be a reference to the rapture or the second coming, but rather to the abiding presence of Christ through the Spirit in the believer. The coming of Christ to them, in that sense, seems to not be a reference to his second coming.

And then there will be passages that we shall find which seem to speak of his coming back to them simply in the resurrection. That is, he's going away to the cross, but a little while after that he's going to come back, of course, by being resurrected. And so sometimes his coming to them seems to be a reference to his coming back from the grave.

And a few days later from this he appeared to them again alive. And there are contexts in which he says, I will come to you, and it seems to mean that. There is also the context that I mentioned a moment ago, his coming in the form of the Holy Spirit to them.

And then there are passages where it seems to speak of his second coming. Some commentators have pointed out that the distinction between Jesus coming at Pentecost in the Spirit and coming at his second coming is a vanishing distinction in this gospel. Because there's not very much clearly taught about the second coming of Christ in the gospel of John.

Of course, we usually think of John 14, 3, if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself. And that may well be a reference to his second coming. But that's not altogether clear in view of the context.

It could be, I could even say it probably is. But if it is, it's one of the few places, maybe the only place where there's a clear reference to the second coming of Christ in the

gospel of John. And yet there's many references to his coming.

And this may be important for us to make a mental note of for later when we study the book of Revelation written by the same author. Because there's many times in the book of Revelation that the coming of the Lord is spoken of, but in some cases it clearly is not a reference to the second coming. As for instance, in Revelation 3 and verse 20, Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him. The coming of the Lord to the person who opens the door is not the second coming. Likewise, to the church of Ephesus in Revelation chapter 2, Jesus said, If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp from its place.

Your lampstand from its place. That's in verse 5, Revelation 2, 5. Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent. This doesn't sound like it's a reference to the second coming of Christ in view of the fact that it talks about removing the lampstand of this particular church from its place.

It seems to be a reference to his coming in judgment to eliminate that church if it doesn't repent. And then, of course, there are places in Revelation where arguably it may be talking about his coming in judgment at some other historical point in time and not a reference to his second coming, although that's always hard to tell. John's writings are somewhat obscure about this and the book of Revelation is not less so than the gospel of John.

The only difference is that people think they know what the book of Revelation is about and almost every time they read of his coming there they assume it means the second coming. It may not at all be the case. It's not quite that easy to tell.

In John 14, 28, he said, You have heard me say to you, I am going away and coming back to you. If you loved me, you would rejoice because I said, I am going to the Father, for my Father is greater than I. So, again, he's talking about going away and coming back again. He does, in chapter 16, verses 5 through 7, he says, But now I go away to him who sent me.

This would appear to be a reference to his ascension because we don't know that Jesus went up to the Father during the three days that his body was buried. In fact, it would seem that he had not. When he rose from the dead, he told Mary Magdalene he had not yet ascended to the Father.

And therefore, this reference and some of the others sound like it's talking about his ascension. But he says, Now I go away, I'm talking about chapter 16, verse 5, to him who sent me. And none of you ask me where you're going because I have said these things to

you.

Sorrow has filled your hearts. 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. Clearly, his ascension appears to be the going away in this particular statement.

In verse 16 of the same chapter, it says, A little while and you will not see me. And again, a little while and you will see me because I go to the Father. That's a strange statement.

A little while you won't see me. Apparently, meaning when he dies and goes to the grave. A little while you will see me.

Which sounds like it's talking about a few days later when he's resurrected. Although that's not at all clear in view of his statement, because I go to the Father. How could his going to the Father cause us to see him? Well, it is not impossible that this is what he's referring to and that it's figurative.

It does say in the book of Hebrews that we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels. We now see him. We run this race looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

There are statements like that in the Bible. Jesus said, Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God. That may not be with the natural eye, but it's hard to say.

All I'm saying is that throughout this discourse, Jesus has a continuing idea that he gives again and again that I'm going away and I'm coming back. Now, in some of the cases, as I say, his going away would appear to be his ascension. Almost certainly it is.

And his coming back from there would have to be his second coming. But where he was going immediately that night was somewhere else. He wasn't going to ascend into heaven that night.

He was going to be arrested that night after this discourse was given. The same night he was arrested. And then he was taken away from them for a while, a few days.

And then he came back then. So it's hard to know how these things are to be seen as intertwining. We have to take them case by case.

And in a few situations, we just won't really be able to be sure how he means it. In addition to these announcements that he's going away and coming back again, the entire discourse is full of several promises that come over and over again. Of course, we already mentioned his promise that he'll come back.

Also, the promise to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. There are several places where

he speaks about this. We read one of those in chapter 14, verses 15 through 17.

There is another one near the end of the chapter, in chapter 14, verses 25 and 26. He again speaks of the helper, the Holy Spirit coming. In chapter 15, he mentions the Holy Spirit again.

In chapter 15, verse 26, he says, But when the Helper comes, whom I send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of me. And then again in chapter 16, around verse 7 through 15, there's an extended discussion there about the Holy Spirit and his coming to them and the work he'll do when he comes. So there's quite a bit in this discourse of repeated reference to Jesus sending the Holy Spirit.

This is part of the reasons that they were not to be troubled. He was going away, and that was a troubling thought to them. But a couple of things, at least, actually more, are promised to them that are supposed to alleviate some of this anxiety.

One is he'll come back. Secondly, he'll send his Holy Spirit. And thirdly, he promises that they will be able in his absence to use his name in prayer.

And that would mean that he is conferring upon them the privilege of acting on his authority. He's conferring to them the power of attorney, as it were, so that although he is not physically present with them, they are able to realize the same power that he had demonstrated among them by using his name. We see this in chapter 14.

For example, verses 12 through 14. We see it again in chapter 15, verse 7, where he says, If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you desire, and it shall be done to you. And in verse 16 of that chapter, You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

So that's chapter 15, verses 7 and 16. And then we have more of it a little further on in chapter 16, verses 23 through 27, which says, And in that day you will ask me nothing. Most assuredly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in figurative language.

I will skip on down to verse 26. In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say 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. So he repeatedly tells them that in his absence they will be given the privilege of using his name in prayer and having whatever they ask granted to them, just as much as if he was with them.

And a couple of times, there's a promise also he offers that they will have peace. He's



told them not to let their hearts be troubled. He specifically confers upon them his peace.

In chapter 14, verse 27, Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. And again, in chapter 16, in verse 33, he says, These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace.

In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. So here, these recurring themes are throughout the entire passage. He's going to be going away, but he promises A, to return eventually, sometime.

B, to send the Holy Spirit, another helper to be with them as he has been with them until now. He won't be with them in the same sense, but his spirit will be. Thirdly, they can act in his name while he's gone.

And fourthly, he gives them his peace so that even though in the world they will have tribulation, yet because he has overcome the world, they will have a peace, as Peter later puts it in 1 Peter, that passes all understanding. Excuse me, Philippians says that, Philippians chapter 4. Peter speaks with joy, inexpressible and full of glory. These are the things that Jesus promises repeatedly in this discourse.

Along with these promises, however, he makes repeated reference to certain duties, certain responsibilities that he's leaving with them. He is going away, and he's leaving the task that he had begun to be completed by them, by the church. And so he says, for example, in chapter 15, verses 4 through 7, that they are to abide in him.

And if they do, they can expect to bear fruit in their lives, the fruit that God's looking for. Chapter 15, verses 4 through 7 say, Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the true vine, you are the branches.

He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

So, the first duty, first, at least logically, is to abide in him. They are in him, in the sense that they are his disciples, and they will be participating in his spirit. He hasn't revealed this at this point, but Paul later pointed out that they become part of his body, and to be in Christ is essentially the same as to be in his body, just like the organs of your body are in you.

And so they are to remain in Christ, and if they do, they will bear fruit. One thing he says again and again throughout this discourse is that they are to keep his commandments while he is gone. It is their duty to abide in him and to keep his commandments.

In John 13, for example, in verses 14 and 15, he says, If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. Now, there's not in that verse a reference to his commands, but to his example. But his commandments agree always with his example, unlike the Pharisees who would say and not do.

Jesus said and did. And he showed by example what they were to do. And in verse 34, of course, of chapter 13, he gave them a new commandment which was that they should love one another as he loved them.

Throughout chapter 14, again and again, there is reference to the need for them to obey his commandments. In chapter 14, verse 15, he said, If you love me, keep my commandments. And he connected the same two thoughts, namely loving him and keeping his commandments, also in verses 21 and 23.

The person who has my commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves me. And in verse 23, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. So, loving him... Actually, it's interesting.

He doesn't say love me. He says, however, that if a person does love me, he'll keep my commands. The assumption is they do love him, or at least they profess to.

And those who do love him can demonstrate it, not by their words, but by their obedience to him. In chapter 15, he repeatedly stresses again the need for them to obey his commandments. In chapter 15, verse 12, This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

And in verse 14, You are my friends if you do whatever I command you. And in verse 17, These things I command you, that you love one another. So, it is their duty to abide in him and to love one another, which is his command, to keep his commandments.

And there's one other duty he confers upon them, and this is especially upon them as apostles. In chapter 15, verse 27. Chapter 15, verse 27, he says, And you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning.

Now, when I say this is given to them distinctly as apostles, that doesn't mean that only apostles are allowed to bear witness. You know, we think basically of witnessing as something that all Christians are to do. However, bearing witness in this particular instance refers to testifying to what they've seen.

So, it's like a witness in court bears witness to what they've seen. He says, You've been with me from the beginning. Clearly, he's speaking to them as the twelve, the ones who had spent all that time with him while he was on earth.

They were now to testify to the things that he had done and said. And they did so in the

gospels that they wrote. They gave testimony.

The gospel of John and the gospel of Matthew, the gospel of Mark are all gospels that record the witness of the apostles who bore witness to the things they saw. So, the apostles had three duties that he mentioned to them. They need to abide in him.

They need to obey his commands. And they were commissioned to be his special witnesses of what he had done. Another theme that comes up again and again in the discourse has reference to their relationship to the world.

Now, Jesus was not going to be visibly and physically with them to give them guidance in this. So, they had to watch out for the tendency to be absorbed into the world. They were called to be an alternative society, a society that lives alongside the world, a little bit like David's 600 men who were under David, although they lived in a hostile environment that the prevailing king, Saul, had his troops and most of the people were loyal to him.

And David and his men were a hated minority in a hostile environment. So, the disciples of Jesus were to see themselves in the world. And Jesus made several references to the prince of this world, which were references to Satan, of course.

The first time he mentioned the prince of this world was actually back in chapter 12 and verse 31, where Jesus said, Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. I said prince of this world because that's the King James terminology.

This new King James is the ruler of this world. That's a reference to Satan. Over in chapter 14 and verse 30, Jesus said, I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming and he has nothing in me.

So, there's Satan again. The ruler of this world was coming and he was going to take Jesus away, although he really had nothing on Jesus. We'll talk about that verse a little bit more in a few minutes.

Also, in chapter 16 and verse 11, he says, The spirit will bear witness to the world of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. Three times, Jesus makes reference to the ruler of this world, which is Satan. And twice are in the upper room discourse.

Once was in chapter 12, verse 31, before he began the discourse in the upper room. But in chapter 15, he talks a fair amount about what the disciples could expect in terms of their relationship to the world. If you look at chapter 15, verse 18 through 24, he says, If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you're not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. And he goes on and talks about this some more.

We'll wait until we get to chapter 15 to delve into this more deeply. In chapter 16, there's a number of references to the relationship of the disciples to the world. And he says, They should expect to be persecuted.

Verse 2 of chapter 16 says, They will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming when whoever kills you will think that he offers God a service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor me.

Now, he doesn't refer to the world. At least he doesn't use that expression here. But he says, They'll do this to you because they haven't known me or known the Father.

If you look at 1 John, chapter 3, we'll see that John says the exact same thing about the world here. 1 John 3.1 The first epistle of John restates many of the points that are found in the Upper Room Discourse. And in 1 John 3.1, it says, Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God.

Therefore, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. So Jesus said to them in chapter 16, verse 3, that the world will do these things to them because they didn't know Him or the Father. John restates that in 1 John 3.1. Other references to what they could expect from the world or what the relationship would be between them and the world are found in, for example, verse 20.

Most assuredly, I will say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. That's when Jesus died. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.

That's a reference to His resurrection. In the same chapter, verse 33, he says, These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. But in the world, you're going to have tribulation.

But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Even in the next chapter, when Jesus is praying, He makes a couple of references relevant to the subject of the disciples in the world. In chapter 17, verses 14 through 16, John 17, verses 14 through 16, Jesus is praying for His disciples and He says, I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. Many Christians are just begging to be taken out of the world, and some people think that that's the best thing that can happen to the church is for the church to be taken out of the world. But Jesus said, I don't pray that you take them out of the world.

That apparently isn't the will of God. That you should keep them from the evil one, however, is the will of God. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth, He says. Now, we'll talk about that

prayer another time.

We can see then that Jesus, on sort of a rotating basis, or on a recurring basis, talks about His going away. He gives them promises that are to reassure them in His absence. He delineates a duty that they will have while He is gone, and He warns them about the relationship that they can expect to have to the world.

It will not be, in most cases, a friendly one. When the church is too friendly with the world, it suggests the church isn't really doing the thing that Jesus said to do. One other point I want to make, and then we'll go verse by verse through chapter 14, and that is that throughout this discourse, on several occasions, Jesus tells us, or tells the disciples, why He gave this discourse, why this lengthy discourse.

He says, for example, in chapter 15, verse 11, These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. Now, He was going away, and they were going to be troubled, but He told them the things He's telling them here, so they could be joyful. Contrary to what the circumstances would dictate, in terms of their mood, they would have occasion to be joyful if they took to heart what He was saying on this occasion.

That was, in other words, this was intended to be a comforting word to them, one that would give them joy, despite the circumstances that He was predicting. In chapter 16, verse 1, chapter 16, verse 1, These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. So He figured if He gave them some advance notice of what to expect, they would not be as inclined to stumble when hard times came.

And we've already read chapter 16, verse 33, These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. So He gave these things, means the discourse we're reading, the upper room discourse, He spoke it so that His joy would be in them, so that they'd have peace, and so that they might be prevented from stumbling. There's also another thing He says, and He says it three times, about His reasons for speaking this, and this particularly has to do with His reasons for predicting the things He predicts.

Not everything in the discourse is predictive in nature, but some of the things that He told them were, in fact many of them, were predictive of things that had not yet happened, but were going to happen. He says in chapter 13, verse 19, Now I tell you before it comes, so that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He. So He's saying, I'm telling you something that's going to happen before it happens.

I'm telling you about this so that when it does happen, you'll know that I knew. You'll know that I'm who I said I was. My credentials will be established by having predicted the future, which is of course the credential of the true spokesman from God, or prophet of God.

In chapter 14, He says something very much like that. Chapter 14, verse 29, He says, And now I have told you before it comes, so that when it does come to pass, you may believe. Same kind of idea there.

Once again, He's telling why He's predicting things. Those other verses we looked at basically said what His reasons were for giving the discourse, for speaking to them at length on this occasion, but here He's telling precisely why it is that this discourse contains specific predictions about what they can expect in the future, so that when it happens, you'll know that He knew. You'll believe in Him more fully.

And by the way, if Christians ever do have doubts, and they sometimes do, because we certainly live in an unbelieving age, and even the church, depending on what church you go to, you'll find churches often do not inspire much faith in the Bible or in Christ. Some of them actually are full of people with very little faith in the Bible and in Christ when it comes down to the way they live and the way they really believe. And you may find it at times where you begin to wonder, you know, am I really kind of on a wild goose chase here, believing this Christian religion? Am I in a false scent here? I mean, have I just been duped? And Jesus said, well, just so that you don't fall away and lose your faith, I'm giving you these predictions in advance so that when they come to pass, you'll know, you'll believe in me.

Now, we can see that the things He predicted did come to pass, and not only the things He predicted here, but the things that God predicted through all the prophets in the Old and the New Testament have come to pass, by and large. There may be a few of them that remain to come to pass in the second coming of Christ, but for the most part, all the things that have been predicted have come to pass, and the reason God told us in advance was so that we would have an objective evidence that Christianity is true, that the Bible is the Word of God, that Jesus is who He said He was, and, you know, if you're ever assailed by doubts, then count on it. The ruler of this world will come and try to shoot his flaming arrows of doubt at you.

Call to mind. This is what these predictions were for. Call to mind the remembrance of what Jesus said, what the prophets said before it happened, and then it did happen.

And He says, I tell you in advance so that when it comes to pass, your faith will be established. And I'll tell you, on any occasion throughout my entire life, from my childhood on up, whenever I have doubted, and it's only been momentarily, I've never entertained doubts about the veracity of the Christian faith more than a few seconds, really. Because whenever the doubts arise, I don't consider them something to just live with for a while.

I have to face them. And, I mean, some people may just kind of live with nagging doubts long term. I can't afford to do that.

I'm a Bible teacher, for one thing. And even before I was a Bible teacher, my faith was the most important thing in my life. And it wasn't satisfactory to go around, you know, for several hours or several days wondering whether my faith was true or not.

I would have to address those doubts the moment they came. And there's two things that I always call to mind, and they always removed all doubt instantly. One was fulfilled prophecy, the fulfilled predictions of the Bible.

There's just no explanation for it other than that God spoke to me. And that's something very important to call to mind. The other was, of course, the whole historical fact of the empty tomb of Christ and the inadequacy of any explanation other than the biblical explanation of how that tomb happened to be emptied when it was.

Apart from belief in the resurrection of Christ, there simply is no adequate explanation of the phenomenon of the empty tomb. But those two things in particular have never failed to just banish all reasonable doubts. I think we can say that we are entitled to say that Christianity is true beyond a reasonable doubt.

There are doubts, but they're not reasonable. And if we meet those doubts when they come to us with reasoning, and I don't mean to make it sound like it's just a mental thing, but doubts attack you in this part of your being, in your mind. And to answer them with obvious and irrefutable truth, or what Luke calls in the book of Acts many infallible proofs.

Jesus showed himself alive to them again after three days with many infallible proofs. Well, we certainly have those. And among the strongest of them are the fulfilled predictions of the Scripture, and that's what they're there for.

So that a Christian never has to wonder, you know, am I just kind of gullibly believing something because, you know, somebody convincingly presented these arguments and caught me on a vulnerable moment and, you know, I'm kind of just emotionally involved with this that may not be true at all. Yes, Jeffrey? Sure as me, it is true. Well, it's true.

I mean, that certainly is a corroborating evidence that Jesus changed the world in the way he did. Although someone might argue, well, Muhammad changed his part of the world pretty big time permanently, too. I mean, if you look at one quarter of the world's population being Muslim right now, he didn't change it for the better, but he changed it.

And there have been men, you know, individuals, Alexander the Great and many others have really changed the world in remarkable ways. But you're right. I mean, obviously we don't put Jesus in the same class as those men, but those are the kinds of... That kind of thing corroborates the truthfulness of Christianity to me, but it doesn't prove it infallibly because if I wanted to be particularly cynical and skeptical, I could say, oh, well, the world had to be changed in some direction by someone.

It just happened to be this guy, Jesus, whose ideas took hold. But really, you know, I should say there's a third factor there. Besides those two rational factors, there's the fact of answered prayers that I've known all my life.

You know, I mean, there's just... I have seen too many miracles. Now, I don't mean miracles like legs lengthening and eyeballs popping back into empty sockets and stuff like that, although I've heard about those things happening. It's not the kind of things that have inspired my faith.

I've just known the faithfulness of God for 30-something years. He hasn't answered every prayer the way I wanted him to, but he's answered a heap of them in ways that were absolutely unlikely to occur except God intervene. And sometimes I feel like if I allow any doubts to reside in my mind for more than a few seconds, that I'm being terribly disloyal to a God who's shown himself so faithful to me with many confirmations in my life so many times.

Anyway, Jesus said twice and even three times, we've looked at twice, the third one's in chapter 16 and verse 4, that he told these things in advance for their benefit, for the benefit of their faith long term. Chapter 16, verse 4, he says, But these things I have told you so that when the time comes you may remember that I told you of them. Okay, so I mean, that's the same idea.

The purpose of his predictions was that after their fulfillment they would inspire faith when we remember that Jesus had said it in advance. Okay, those are the main themes that we're going to find throughout this discourse. Let's go into chapter 14 and hopefully in some detail.

Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. Now, let not your heart be troubled.

Well, no doubt he had to say that because their hearts at this point were troubled. He had just told them in the previous chapter that he was going away. And then he gave them the real bad news that one of them was going to betray him.

And that got them all buzzing. Is it I? Is it I? I wonder if it's me. And, you know, he was talking about some pretty depressing stuff there at that table.

Surprised them. Talked about his own blood being shed for the new covenant and so forth. And that didn't sound very good to them either probably.

And so he says, listen, don't be troubled. Don't let your heart be troubled. Now, Christians have often taken this line as a generic exhortation not to let your hearts be



troubled in any situation.

You might think, since I've introduced it that way, that I'm going to say that's not right to do and this only applies to a narrow situation. I think it is right to do. I think that we can take this generically.

Because what Jesus is essentially saying is, even though I'm going away, don't let your hearts be troubled. Why not? Well, because he's sending his spirit. He's going to come back after all.

He's leaving us with his authority. These are good things. He's given us his peace.

And therefore I would say that the thing that their hearts were troubled about was the fact that he was going to be absent. If your heart is ever troubled about anything and if that thing you're troubled at is something you wouldn't be troubled at if he was physically with you right here, then it's applicable. Because the purpose, I mean, the reason behind their having troubled hearts was his absence that he had now.

I'm going to be gone. And I'll bet that almost everything that's ever troubled you, those troubling things would cease to be troubling if Jesus simply was right here with you right now, physically, in a way you could see him. And his presence with you would banish all anxiety.

Now, he isn't present with you in that sense and therefore we do experience anxiety, but what he's saying here is, despite the fact that I'm not going to be visibly and physically in your presence as I have been, you still don't need to be troubled because I will be with you in another sense through my spirit and through my name, which is left with you, and I am going to come back after all. Now, he says, you believe in God, believe also in me. He's saying essentially, trust me here, you think this is a bad deal.

I said I'm going away. That makes you sorry. I said someone here is going to betray me.

And that's no doubt.