

I. My Notes ... WWC message 5/31

II. Series: That You Might Believe

- Title: Persecution and Protection – Part 2
- Text: John 15:18-16:15
- Quote: The safest place in all the world is in the will of God, and the safest protection in all the world is the name of God. Dr. Warren Wiersbe (Pastor, Author)

III. Introduction

- We have been on a journey looking at Jesus instruction to the Disciples (and ultimately to us) during and after the Last Supper. The earthly ministry of Jesus is coming to a close, and things are about to change. This change is necessary. Jesus has been speaking about “these things” (16:1) to prepare the Disciples and keep them from stumbling (changing course or being distracted). Pastor Chuck Swindoll said this, “These things” refers to everything Jesus had to say about the believer’s relationship to the world, which is strained at best, hostile at other times, and can become deadly. Jesus revealed this to the disciples so they would not be startled and then stumble in their spiritual walk.” (Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary). Our journey through John’s Gospel has been to help us grow in understanding and encourage us along our spiritual walk and growth.
- Things were changing in the lives of the Disciples, things continue to change today. We need to be prepare so that we are not caught off guard. When I read this passage, it reminded me of the parable recorded in Matthew 25 of the ten virgins. 5 were prepared – 5 were

not ... they all fell asleep. When the bridegroom came only 5 were able to shine their lamps and be seen, the others were devastated. Jesus is preparing the Disciples to allow their “light” to always shine. This comes with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit – the Comforter. He has come to guide us to ALL truth ... which begins with the message of God’s love. Today’s prevalent message that all paths lead to the God of Love is deceptive. It denies the role and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- The words of Jesus should be echoing deep within us today. *“34 “Be on your guard, so that your minds are not dulled from carousing, drunkenness, and worries of life, or that day will come on you unexpectedly 35 like a trap. For it will come on all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 But be alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:34-36 CSB).*
- I have begun this way because over the last few days I have read some articles that have caused some concern. There is one article about Sam’s Club (a nationwide store) changing their policies and procedures. They are going to eliminate checkout lines and to do business there you will need to use the “scan and go” tab on their app. Every transaction will be done digitally and electronically – including purchases at the gas pumps. It’s a move toward Artificial Intelligence controlling and dictating what and how you buy things. The other article caused even more alarm bells to go off and shout “wake up” ... The article discusses a significant shift in Silicon Valley, where leading tech figures—including Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and Sam Altman—are proposing a future that moves beyond smartphones entirely. Instead of relying on traditional touchscreen devices, they envision new technologies such as brain

implants, digital tattoos, and augmented reality glasses that would allow users to interact with digital content through thought, vision, or even their skin. This is already being tested on people right now. There are people with implants in their heads and a tattoo on their arm to monitor and track what they do. Jesus warned of things like these happening so that we would be aware and not stumble.

- Let's talk about the persecution and promise that awaits.

IV. What's Coming

- **John 16:2-4 CSB**

2 They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God.

3 They will do these things because they haven't known the Father or me. 4 But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember I told them to you. I didn't tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.

- Throughout history violence has been justified in the name of faith. There have been persecutions, abuse, and killings because of people's fear and intent to force people to act the way they want.
- There are denominations that will ostracize you today if you don't 100% agree with their way. There are churches that will stop you from attending if you don't fit into their mold.
- All these things have been done in the name of God, who they profess to know, but behave in a manner that doesn't align with His principles and precepts.
- Jesus had been with His Disciples, they had formed a bond, and now He was telling them that He must go away – that He would be somewhere that they couldn't go. This must have been confusing and concerning, they were hurting and distressed ... think about the

things running through their minds. Without the Lord and Leader what was going to happen; they had given up everything – now what would they do? In verses 17 through 19 of this chapter their confusion and shock are evident. It is evident that they were having difficulty understanding what Jesus was telling them.

- Look at how Jesus questions them ... *“5 But now I am going away to him who sent me, and not one of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 6 Yet, because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.” (John 16:5-6 CSB).*
- Do you think that they were so focused on what was about to change, on what they were losing, that they were unable to hear the message?

V. The Message We Need to Hear

- **John 16:7-11 NLT**

7 But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.

8 And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. 9 The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. 10 Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.

11 Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

- This passage reminds us that the Holy Spirit is actively working in the world, guiding people to truth, convicting hearts, and revealing God's righteousness. It encourages believers to rely on the Spirit for wisdom and strength.
- It was likely difficult for the Disciples to understand why it would be better for Jesus to go away. The ministry that Jesus did over the

past 3 ½ years was one that involved physical presence. Even when there were healings from a distance, it related to someone being in His presence. Jesus had to leave so that the Advocate could come and open the door to continual communion with God as opposed to needing to be in His physical presence. Think about the words of Paul here ... *“We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world.”* (**Ephesians 6:12 CEV**). The Apostle is reminding believers that the struggles being faced are not merely against people or physical challenges but against spiritual forces that oppose God’s truth. Paul emphasizes that the real battle is against evil influences—forces that seek to deceive, discourage, and lead people away from God.

- This is why it is important to know the Holy Spirit and to trust His ministry in our lives. He is our guide, He is our comforter, and He is our Advocate in the challenges we face.
- Everything Jesus has done and continues to do is for our benefit. In simple terms, He has our back. Jesus continues to intercede (to pray) for us (John 14), He instructs the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide us by providing wisdom and direction in our lives each day. We are privileged to have a partner on our faith journey.

VI. How Does This Happen?

- I cannot remember who said this, but there is a quote that is stuck in my head as I continue to write this ... “If you want to be popular, preach happiness. If you want to be unpopular, preach holiness.” What we are looking at is a lifestyle that has its foundation on trust in Jesus Christ and the choice to follow His instruction. This means we are dependent on the Holy Spirit.

- The role of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to guide us and direct us to the truth about sin, to reveal what it means (and looks like) to be in a right relationship with the Lord God, and to help us understand that ultimate judgment has taken place – death is defeated for those in Christ, Satan no longer has a hold on the life of a believer, and He has been judged.
- People have made the Holy Spirit (some call Him the “Holy Ghost”) out to be this mysterious force that empowers people to do things that they don’t normally do. The overemphasis on signs and wonders has become the identifier for some as evidence of the Holy Spirit. This is a misinterpretation. Now, let me say here that I believe that God is capable to do anything. He will not contradict His nature. The reason so many people were attracted to Jesus was because of the signs. The signs were there to open the door to the most important relationship that one could ever have. The evidence of the Holy Spirit in one’s life is not the gift (the sign), it is the fruit (see Galatians 5:22-23) - and this leads to peace and joy. Signs and miracles happen to point others to God. This gives Him the honor and glory He deserves and allows others to see His love in real ways.
- Because of what man has done, seeking power and significance, the connection (the relationship) with the Holy Spirit has become complicated. I think that Jesus will clarify this for us in the next few verses ...

VII. Clarity

- **John 16:12-15 NLT**

12 “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all

truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'

- Let me say it this way ... Jesus is telling us the role of the Holy Spirit is to continue to reveal the truth that Jesus taught. Think back to one of our earlier discussions in John's Gospel. *"23 But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes the Father wants such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24 CSB). Everything Jesus did honored the Father. Jesus pointed other people to worship (honor and glorify) the Father through their connection with Him. Jesus came to reveal God the Father. The Holy Spirit came to guide us by what Jesus taught. The message is consistent.
- The role of the Holy Spirit is to reveal God's love (a love that gives, that serves, that finds the best in others). There are a multitude of ways that can happen. But it begins with the foundation of what Jesus said.

VIII. Wrapping up

- I want to be clear with you. In no way am I minimizing the work or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Do I believe in them? Absolutely! Do I believe that they are still active today? Definitely. Man just needs to stop putting his control, his expectations, his way on how the Holy Spirit works in our lives.
- Jesus said that the Holy Spirit brings glory to Jesus by revealing, by helping us understand, what He (Jesus) said. Jesus also said,

“Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: *“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”* **(John 12:28 ESV)**. The life and ministry of Jesus was about giving glory to the Father. So, each one (of the Trinity) pointed to the other to receive honor and glory. And what Jesus has just said to the Disciples, ***“My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.”*** **(John 15:8 CSB)**. Now, draw the connection ... the fruit of the Holy Spirit (truly our transformation) is evident in how we love others ... are joy and peace evident in our lives, even when there are storms? Do we treat others with kindness and compassion? Are we consistent in our faith walk? (Notice I said consistent, not perfect). Are our lives marked by God’s way, the path of love and making sure others have the help they need? This is the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s bond with us. This is the evidence that we are Disciples and living The Way that Jesus has showed us all. And the ultimate benefit ... God is glorified! And He deserves that.

- Let’s Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always