

“CARING FOR THE FLOCK”

John 16:12-22

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INTRODUCTION

The Mission Field is only as strong as the home base. Yes, our churches must send workers around the world and across America with the Gospel in order to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (16:8-11). But **we must not neglect the home base!**

What happens if the home churches start paying attention to false teachings, begin using dishonest practices, and yield to clever manipulators? **The history of Christianity is littered with the ruins of leaders, churches, denominations, and Christians who at one time stood firm and faithful.** The true church must “exercise unceasing vigilance” (Hendrickson, 327).

Jesus sent the Helper not only to help with missionary and evangelistic work, but also to strengthen His church, solidify its teachings, and guide it into “all truth.”

One generation from now it is possible that Berean Baptist Church will be on the litter heap of ruined churches, or else that it will cease to be effective in fulfilling its ministry.

THIS MUST NOT HAPPEN! The Lord through the apostles and by the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit has given us everything that we need for doctrinal stability and for powerful ministry.

But, Jesus has gone away from His people during the time that the Helper is here.

Do we miss Him while He is gone? Yes we do! Yes, and we go through sorrow while we wait for Him to manifest Himself again at His return. As the disciples rejoiced to see the risen Savior after the sorrow of the cross, and as His followers overflowed with joy once the power of the Spirit was poured upon them on the day of Pentecost, so we will experience exultant joy when we enter into our Lord’s presence—either at death or especially at His Second Coming.

YOU MUST STAND STRONG UNTIL THE LORD RETURNS—THEN YOU WILL REJOICE WITH EXALTATION!

I. THE LORD GIVES HIS FOLLOWERS WHAT WE CAN “BEAR” (12)

Mentally; emotionally.

Used of bearing the cross, heavy stones, heavy burdens, etc.

For the disciples the many more things in one sense are the future revelation, and all that was entailed in receiving and delivering it: *Acts, the Epistles, Revelation*

Paul’s gospel was not opposed to Christ’s; the new revelation builds upon the old; it clarifies and amplifies.

Aren’t we thankful that the Lord gives us what we need when we need it?

II. THE LORD GIVES HIS FOLLOWERS EVERYTHING WE NEED (13-15)

A. He Sends the Helper

1. He is a person: “He”
2. He is the Spirit
3. He is characterized by Truth, and is the source of Truth.
4. He is the “Guide”—who shows the way, guides us into the Way
Jesus is the Way, and the Truth (14:6)

B. The Helper Guides into all the Truth

All the truth of Jesus’ life, teachings, enlightening the past teaching and filling with new insights and truths consistent with it.

C. The Helper speaks according to what He hears—from the Father and the Son

He does not speak according to His own initiative.

D. The Helper discloses the future

The future Church Age and all that it entails, but also the distant eschatological future including the book of Revelation etc.

E. The Helper Glorifies Christ—to reveal Christ is to glorify Him.

1. He takes what belongs to Christ
Christ possesses all that belongs to the Father
2. He discloses it to the church.

There is an absolute unity between the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Yes, their task was massive, and in a sense overwhelming; but the Spirit made them fit for the task. So He does with us today.

III. THE LORD PREPARES US FOR THE TIME OF LOSS AND SORROW (16-22)

A. The Confusion about not Seeing Christ and then Seeing Christ (16-19)

1. Jesus’ statement (16)
2. Their confusion—yet hesitancy to ask (17-18)
3. Jesus’ explanation (19)

B. The Condition of the Believer During His absence (20-22)

1. Weeping and lamenting—outward form of sorrow (20)
2. Sorrowful—inward form of sorrow (20)
3. State of sorrow (21, 22)
4. Anguish, affliction, travail—like a woman in childbirth (21)
Compare many OT passages of pre-messianic struggles and sufferings:
Is. 26; Hosea 13; Micah 4; etc.
The woman’s “hour” has come.

C. The Condition of the World During the Lord’s Absence

It rejoices—the source of its conviction and discomfort is gone (20).

- D. The Change in the Believer's condition upon the Lord's return
1. Sorrow will be transformed into joy (20)
 2. Birth of the child changes the situation
 Anguish no longer remembered
 Joy is experienced—A man—human—is born into the world
 What this means Scripturally—in relation to the believer
 In relation to Christ
 3. The Lord sees them again—not merely that they see Him (22).
 4. No one can remove their joy!

CONCLUSION

The Lord gives us only what we can bear; He gives us everything we need; He prepares us for the time of sorrow and loss; He uses us to do His work.

- We have the Helper—the Spirit of Truth.
- We have the completed Scriptures.
- We currently go through the period of anguish in His absence.
- Pains of childbirth continue.
- The Lord is coming soon and our sorrow will be turned to joy
- For the Christian—that has already happened in His resurrection. True victory is already accomplished. We serve triumphantly.

Stand strong; be busy in His work. The Lord is sufficient.

Rejoice in the Lord, for the victory is ours!