

²³ 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. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ 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. 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. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.”

Text: John 14:23-31 A 5-17-26 Genesis 11:1-9 Acts 2:1-21 Psalm 143 Resp. Psalm: 48
Hymns: 341, 732, 351, 738

JESUS PREPARES HIS FOLLOWERS

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Jesus would soon ascend back to heaven, and He wanted the disciples to be ready when that time came. The disciples were used to seeing Jesus and talking with Him face-to-face, but soon that wouldn’t be the case. Our text takes place not long before Jesus ascended. Jesus’ words to His disciples also help us as we wait for Him to come again and take us to heaven.

Jesus says, “*He who does not love Me does not keep My words.*” Some people who are living in a way that God says is wrong excuse themselves by saying, “God made me this way.” God did make us (Ps. 139:13-16; etc.). But God did not make us to sin. James says, “*Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed*” (Jms. 1:13-14). Can you imagine when you were a child and you did wrong, trying to excuse yourself by telling your parents, “God made me this way”? That would not have worked with your mom and dad, and it sure doesn’t work with God. Living a sinful life and not being sorry for it is not showing love for God (or, for that matter, not showing faith in God).

Jesus says, “*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word.*” We show our love for God by doing what He says. We don’t believe or do whatever we feel is right, and then try to find Bible passages that we think say what we believe or what we’re doing is OK. We first see what God says in the Bible. Then we ask God to help us to believe or do what He says. Believing and doing what God says is showing love for Him.

Jesus says, *“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.”* Keeping God’s Word is a fruit of faith and love. God is pleased with all of us who believe in Him and love Him. God loves us and is with us. Jesus assures us, *“I am with you always”* (Mt. 28:20). We can’t see Jesus yet, but He is always with us. What an amazing blessing that the almighty God and our merciful Savior are always with us as we make our way through life! Scripture tells us, *“[God] Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear.”* (He. 13:5-6)

Jesus says, *“The Word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”* Jesus isn’t saying that His words aren’t the Word of God. They are. Jesus is saying that He would never contradict His Father. Jesus never said anything that went against what His Father says. Jesus says, *“I and My Father are one”* (Jn. 10:30). Even Jesus’ enemies understood that He’s saying that He, Jesus, is God, equal to His Father (Jn 10:33). Therefore everything that Jesus says is the Word of God. We can place complete trust in everything Jesus says.

We often fail to love God and believe His Word and obey Him as we should. Jesus says, *“I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do.”* For every one of our failures to love and obey God, we have Jesus’ perfect life of love and obedience to His Father in our place. Jesus lived a perfect life. We’re not saved by what we do for God. We’re saved by what Jesus did for us.

It was the Father’s will that Jesus come down to earth to save us. In perfect love and obedience, Jesus carried out His Father’s will, and we’re saved. Jesus told His disciples, *“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.”* At the time Jesus said this it wouldn’t be long before He suffered and died on the cross. The disciples didn’t have much time left to talk face-to-face with Jesus. Later when Jesus died it would seem as if the devil had defeated Him. But Jesus, the sinless Son of God, rose again, defeating the devil (and sin, and death, and hell)!

Jesus told His disciples, *“I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.”* As the disciples remembered what Jesus told them, and saw it happening just as Jesus said it would, their faith would be strengthened. Jesus says, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away”* (Mt. 24:35). It may take time, but God always keeps His Word. As we experience this in our lives, it strengthens our faith.

Jesus told His disciples, *“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.”* Jesus had let His disciples know that He would ascend back to heaven. The thought of not seeing Jesus and being with Him as they had been used to made them sad (cf. Lk. 24:17). During Jesus’ earthly ministry, He didn’t always make full use of His power as God. But just before He ascended back to heaven Jesus said, *“All power is been given to Me in heaven and on earth”* (Mt. 28:18). As the disciples grew in faith and love, they also grew in their

understanding of, and gratefulness for, Jesus' ascension as their Lord and Savior. At the time Jesus spoke the words of our text, during His earthly ministry, according to His human nature, He could say, "*My Father is greater than I.*" After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, He would once again always make full use of His power as God. Knowing that, the disciples would come to rejoice in Jesus' ascension.

Jesus told His disciples, "*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.*" After Jesus' ascension, the disciples wouldn't be able to see Him and talk with Him as they had. But Jesus promised that the Father would send them the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would help them remember Jesus' words, understand them, and believe them. The Bible says, "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*" (Ro. 10:17). As we keep hearing God's Word here at church, and keep studying our Bibles, the Holy Spirit helps us to understand God's Word and believe it.

Jesus told His disciples, "*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.*" Although the disciples would soon no longer see Jesus and talk with Him face-to-face, His peace would remain with them. They would know in their hearts that Jesus was still with them. As they faced difficult and sometimes frightening trials, they would have Jesus' peace to strengthen them and settle them and make them feel secure.

The world is always looking for peace, and not finding it. They think that peace means no more wars and everyone being nice to everyone else. That would be nice, but because of sin (everyone is sinful, and we live in a sinful world) we're not going to have lasting earthly peace. In spite of our oftentimes lack of outer peace in this world, Jesus gives us inner peace. We have peace in knowing that Jesus forgives our sins (Mt 9:2). We have peace in knowing that Jesus is always with us (Mt. 28:20). We have peace in knowing that Jesus is causing "*all things*" to work out for our good (Ro. 8:28). We have peace in knowing that Jesus is taking us to heaven (Ps. 23:6; Jn. 10:27-28; 14:1-3; etc.). In heaven we'll have perfect peace, perfect health, and perfect happiness forever (Rev. 7:14-17).

Jesus said to His disciples, "*Arise, let us go from here.*" Jesus would soon face the terrible ordeal of His suffering and death for our sins. The disciples would soon face the rest of their lives without being able to see Jesus and talk to Him the way they were used to. But Jesus helped them to be prepared. As Jesus prepared His followers back then, so He prepares you and me today. You and I are still here. We're not in heaven yet. But Jesus is with us. And the time is coming when we'll be with Jesus forever. Amen.