

## 15:1-16:33

The next section in John's account is still part of the Farewell Discourse (cf. 13:31-16:33). But unlike the first half which occurred at a dinner table (cf. 13:31-14:31), the second half of Jesus' parting words are spoken *on the move* (cf. 14:31). Curiously, however, Jesus and the Eleven don't actually head out into the night until 18:1, *after* the so-called "High Priestly Prayer" (cf. 17:1-26).<sup>1</sup> Thus, it seems that this entire scene occurred in *two* phases: one in which they were *seated* at the Last Supper and another in which they all *stood* to leave.

As anyone who's been to a gathering with good friends can tell you, though loved ones might say they're leaving, it can still be some time before they *actually* go. This is because no one wants the get-together to end, so through unspoken consent, everyone works to delay the inevitable. For instance, an excellent way to gauge the health of a church is to track how long it takes congregants to disperse after a service. It's *unhealthy* if everyone goes running for the hills the moment the pastor closes in prayer. In contrast, it's a good sign when believers hang around. This shows that they gather out of feelings of *affection*, not *obligation*. After all, they are supposed to be a community devoted to one another, not some bureaucratic committee. Good churches are filled with people who genuinely *love* each other and *want* to be together. And as such, some of the most heartfelt things are said in those last few parting moments at the end of a church service.

Likewise, because Jesus' disciples were such a close-knit group, this latter segment of the Farewell Discourse contains some of the most passionate of Jesus' sayings. He will speak about such things as love, hate, sorrow, and joy as he's heading for the door. Few sections are as *emotionally* charged as this one, to say nothing of the tender prayer that follows it.

For instance, upon standing, Jesus uses an allegory that would've been familiar to a Jewish mind: *a vineyard* (15:1-16). It would've invoked images of God's lovingkindness for Israel. But, as we'll see, Jesus takes this illustration and *changes* it. Like the O.T., the Lord will portray God as a "husbandman" (15:1), but unlike the O.T. parallels which equate Israel with the vine (cf. Ps. 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; 27; Ezek. 15), Jesus pictures *himself* as "the true vine" and his followers as "the branches" (15:5). Thus, none are secure in God's kingdom unless they are *abiding* in Christ

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<sup>1</sup> Köstenberger (2008), p. 448, notes that it is "possible," though I will note, not necessary, to understand Jesus' words as being said as they were *literally* heading to Gethsemane. This interpretation was popularized by B. F. Westcott's commentary on John in 1908. Personally, this seems to read too much into the text. It's far more likely Jesus spoke in the well-lit quiet of the Upper Room rather than on a walk in the middle of the night (cf. 13:30).

(15:6). Even a Jew must be “born again” if he wants to consider himself a branch fastened to the True Vine (cf. 3:3; Rom. 11:11-24).

Unsurprisingly, this revelation will cause more than a bit of controversy. Telling the nation of Israel that, unless they put their faith in Jesus, they are no longer a part of God’s vineyard would make Jesus’ followers seem like the enemy. In fact, this is why the Lord will talk about how the apostles will be “hated” by the world (cf. 15:17-16:4a). This hatred will not be grounded in reality. As it is today, so it was back then, the world hates Christ and Christians “without a cause” (15:25). The Lord wants his followers to be *prepared* for opposition. Because if they’re caught unawares—i.e., if they forget Jesus’ warnings—the disciples will be at risk of falling away (cf. 16:1). They will need these words when they’re ostracized by their fellow Israelites. They will need to remember that they are indeed the servant of God even when killed by those who “think that [they] doeth God service” (16:2; cf. Ac. 7:58-60).

But, make no mistake, Jesus’ followers will not face the world *alone*. The Holy Spirit will be their “Comforter,” a divine Companion who will accomplish great things through the believer (cf. 16:4b-15). Far from the world winning, God the Spirit will work to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (16:8-12), and he will “guide [the believer] into all truth” (16:13). Through the Spirit, believers will be an *unstoppable* force with the solitary goal of glorifying Jesus Christ (16:14). The great powers of this world are no match for the Holy Ghost.

Lastly, despite what they might feel in the moment (cf. 16:6), the Lord will show that the apostles will have joy (16:16-33). This is not to say they will be exempt from sorrow but that their grief will be *temporary* (16:20). They were, in a manner of speaking, experiencing the pangs of labor (16:21). So, once the pain of the cross passes, they will see the resurrected Lord, the “firstborn of all creation” (Col. 1:15). And, at that moment, their hearts will “rejoice” and not a soul will be able to take that joy from them (16:22). They will forever be men of “good cheer” knowing that, though they may experience trouble in the world, their Lord has “overcome the world” (16:33). Through Christ’s victory they are victorious (cf. 1 Cor. 15:57).

## VIDEO DESCRIPTION

### **Deep Dive: The Gospel of John | Week 53 | John 15:1-16:33**

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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**Pastor's manuscript can be found here:**

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Podcast Details:

Title: Intro To The Farewell Discourse, Pt. 2

