

Sermon Series: “Good News for Life”
“Parting Words of Comfort”
Pastor Norwood N. “Woody” Hingle III, Ph.D.
Sunday, April 18, 2021

Parting words can be important to remember. Sometimes they are kind of unusual words, comical words, in ending a romantic relationship: “The problem is not you, *it is me.*” Other times the parting words can take on more a more serious, somber nature which inspire. It was September, 1776. General George Washington, in the midst of the American Revolution, was desperate to know the whereabouts of the British army near New York City. He asked for a volunteer to spy out the British position, and only one man volunteered. He was a 21 year-old lieutenant. He knew the danger. The penalty for spies who were caught was execution. Nevertheless, he went out and meandered around the British until, unfortunately, he was caught by the British. He was questioned, and found to be a spy. The next day he was led out to be hanged, and it is reported that his parting words were, “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country”. The young man was Nathan Hale. Years later, in 1985, Nathan Hale became officially known as Connecticut’s State Hero. Parting words can be important to remember. And the parting words of Jesus in our passage are especially so.

READ John 14:25-31 (p. 109)

CONTEXT: Jesus has just spoke on the great gift of the Holy Spirit, the Parakletos, which He is leaving them after He parts company with them.

READ vv 25-26. “Jesus explained two important roles of the Holy Spirit will perform as the Parakletos: teacher and reminder.” The Holy Spirit is to teach and remind of all that Jesus had said to them. Have you ever experienced the teaching and reminding role of the Holy Spirit? E.g., I recall last Sunday when we closed the service singing, “I Surrender All”, and the Holy Spirit started teaching me that I need to pay attention to that in certain areas of my life, and during this week He has been teaching me areas where I need to surrender— especially my thought life, and about not watching a certain tv show because it always seems to have something morally wrong— sexually or otherwise. E.g., Mrs. Betty was my Sunday School teacher when I was about eight or nine, and she was a elderly widow who lived alone; her neighborhood was changing and she told us she was praying about whether she should move, and as she prayed she recalled these letters appearing in her mind: S-U-R-R-E-N-D-E-R; so she did just that— she did not move. She told us as result she was getting to know the children in the neighborhood and was blessed by them. E.g., I recall hearing Josh McDowell on the radio this week talking about how he handles his prayer life, where he said he prays all the time, like whether to clean out his garage or his home office, and he referred to the way 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 led him— “rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”.

READ v 27. “Ironically, Jesus offered His peace, not like the peace of the day, the *pax Romana* which was won by the sword, but His peace was won, and not negated, by the cross! Cf. Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 3:15.” READ Philippians 4:6-7. E.g., I like the comment made by New Testament scholar F.F. Bruce in his *John* commentary, where he makes the distinction, “Some

commentators point out that the world can only *wish* peace; Jesus *gives* it.” E.g., I recall the Keith Green song, “Pledge My Head to Heaven”, where he has the line, “Well I’ve had the chance to gain the world and live just like a king, but without your love it doesn’t mean a thing”. I have thought about decisions and stands I have had to make as a Christian and as a pastor, and I know what it is like to have plenty and I know what it is like not to have much materially, and the one constant I have had through it all is Jesus and His peace, the material things were icing on the cake, but not the substance. We will all be tempted in our lives, as we have been already, and I have found the principle in the Bible that is worthy of our lives as Christians— would be rather be rich and compromised as Christians, or poor and faithful to Jesus? Living with the worldview that we’d rather be poor and faithful to Jesus makes all the difference for peace in our lives. Cf. Proverbs 15:16; 16:8. E.g., I recall a story in the *Voice of the Martyrs* magazine on a husband and wife team— Daniel and Victoria— in Nigeria where God was calling them to reach out to Muslims. We have heard of the Muslim terror group in northern Nigeria called Boko Haram, which means, “Western education is forbidden”. Daniel told the Lord he was willing to work with any group except for Muslims, and then the Holy Spirit brought to his attention John 4 where Jesus reached out to the Samaritan woman at the well, and Daniel recalled that there was conflict between the Samaritans and Jews, as there was between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. The Lord brought to his attention John 4:13-14, “Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’” This is the peace that Jesus gives— which is unlike what the world gives. And Daniel and Victoria set up a house in the middle of Nigeria to disciple Muslims who come to Christ, and have been doing so for over 20 years, where Christian converts stay with them for about a year and are disciplined (from the article, “Making Disciples

Among Former Muslims”, in *Voice of the Martyrs*, March, 2021, pp. 6-9). Daniel and Victoria know the difference between the peace as the world gives and the peace of Jesus.

READ v 28. “Jesus referred to His departure as something which should cause rejoicing among the disciples for an unexpected reason: the Father is greater than He. What does this mean? Cf. v 12. C.K. Barrett noted, “. . . the Father is God sending and commanding, the Son is God sent and obedient. John’s thought here is focused on the humiliation of the Son in his earthly life, a humiliation which now, in his death, reached its climax and its end’ (*John*, p. 468).” What we have here is what theologians would call a functional subordinationism, not an ontological subordinationism— i.e., Jesus in His incarnation is functionally inferior to the Father, but personally He is not. E.g., a person can work for a business as a hired hand and thus be inferior to the boss, but in the eyes of the law they are both equals. E.g., D.A. Carson in his commentary *John* (p. 507) speaks of the Queen of England being more wealthy and well-known and powerful than we are, but that does not mean she is greater than we are in God’s sight.

READ vv 29-32. “Before He departed, Jesus made clear that Satan has no power over Him, because He is united by love to the Father. Cf. 12:31.” In 12:31 Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out.” Jesus’ work on the cross and His resurrection prove that Jesus is victorious over Satan. This is good news! But know this— we on our own are not more powerful than Satan. We need the Lord’s help. If ever you or I are in ministry in an area clearly where Satan has an influence, we need to ask the Lord to fill us with His Holy Spirit, that He would empower us, and He would be glorified.

“What comfort do Jesus’ parting words bring us this week?” Jesus will be with us through His Holy Spirit— teaching us and reminding us of what He has taught. What does Jesus need to teach us this week, and remind us about

following Him? Where do we need God's peace? Are we relying on what the world has to offer us to give us peace— a vacation, something to buy, something to drink or eat, or someone to know? Does Satan have an influence in our lives, where we need to ask the Lord to take over as we surrender to the Lord yet again?