

John Chapter 16

As Jesus continues his warning about being hated by the world from Chapter 15, he confirms who they should be worried about. The only people who might want to throw the disciples out of the synagogues are the Jewish leaders who have the authority to do so, right? It would be very surprising for any other group to even think about doing such a thing and consider it a way of offering service to God. So, when we feel rejected by other Christians for following Jesus' example, let us not forget Jesus' warning here.

We should also keep in mind that there have undoubtedly been times in our past when we were ignorant to the things Jesus really wanted from us. We might even have improperly judged or "corrected" behavior in our fellow Christians when we really had no right to do so. Take a moment to think and pray about this, and repent of any instances that God brings to your memory.

However, Jesus' words in this chapter are not all warnings and sadness because now he gets to expand on the good news about the Holy Spirit coming. The disciples are told that having the Holy Spirit present is even better than physically hanging out with Jesus. Can you believe that? How many times have you heard people talk about how wonderful it must have been to walk with Jesus?

Have you ever thought that, spiritually speaking, we have it better than they did during Jesus' earthly ministry? Our connection to God is stronger through the Holy Spirit than it would be if Jesus was physically with us all day long. Make sure you're catching this. If Jesus was standing in front of us, we could ask him any question we want. Also, we could visibly see how he lives and interacts with people. But Jesus is saying it is better for him to leave us with the Holy Spirit.

Doesn't that make you want to spend more time connecting with the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit guides us in everything we do. Plus, the Spirit is always available to us one hundred percent of the time. If your goal is to live a life that glorifies God and points people to Jesus, then you would be foolish to ignore the full-time access you have to the Holy Spirit.

Jesus has already told us that we cannot bear fruit without being connected to him, right? Remember the vine and the branches in Chapter 15? Now, Jesus is telling us the Holy Spirit will do the work of keeping us connected to him.

If you say you want to live a missional lifestyle, then constantly connecting to the Holy Spirit as your guide is a powerful way to stay on the right track. Do you nurture your relationship with the Holy Spirit in a way that demonstrates this? Or, do your actions say the Holy Spirit is just a third wheel of the Holy Trinity?

In Chapter 14, we only briefly touched on the part where Jesus tells the disciples they can get anything they ask for in his name, but here it is again. Weaved into all this talk about the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to highlight our ability to receive from the Father in prayer.

If you are already in tune with the Holy Spirit, then you are well aware this is not a blank check to make any kind of request we can dream up. Jesus isn't saying we have a genie in a bottle that will grant any wish that will please our selfish hearts. Remember that asking for things "in his name" is not the same thing as just tacking on "in Jesus' name" at the end of any request and, poof, expecting it will be done because we said the magic words.

The point Jesus is making here is that once we truly abide in him, once we can start to see the world as he sees it and want the things he wants, then our requests will align with his plan. When our desires match with God's desires, when the furthering of his Kingdom is at the forefront of our mind, that is when our prayers will truly be offered in Jesus' name.

Is this your goal as you seek to engage the world around you? That you will see things as Jesus sees them and seek the transformation he seeks in everything? Is that truly what you want from God? And, are all of your prayers focused around that purpose?