

Adult Teaching Resources

May 20, 2018



Easter: Keeping Close (April 1-May 20)

John 15:9-17 – “Real Love”

John 17:6-19 – “Questions of Belonging”

**John 15:26-16:15 (RCL 15:26-27, 16:4b-15) –
“Goodbye, and Hello”**

Season After Pentecost: The Perils of Pauline ... Thinking (May 27-July 8)

Romans 8:12-17 – “In the Flesh, of the Spirit”

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Goodbye, and Hello

John 15:26-16:15 (RCL 15:26-27, 16:4b-15)

FIT Teaching Guide

by David Woody

This adult teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Bible Background

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” John 16:7

How you say goodbye is important. You can say goodbye angry, sad, happy, grieving, and myriad other emotions. The way you say goodbye sets the stage for the future relationship after you’ve gone.

Today, we celebrate Pentecost. Our text today has Jesus in the process of saying goodbye to the disciples.

Opening

After everyone has arrived, ask the large group to think about all the times they’ve had to say goodbye—not the “goodbye, I’m going to the grocery store” kind of goodbye; but the, “goodbye, I’m moving to a new town or new job, or I need out of this relationship” kind of goodbye.

How did you say goodbye?

What was the situation?

What words did you use?

What did you do or not do to help with your goodbye?

What does the way you say goodbye say about you?

Reading the Bible

What will the Advocate do? (will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth; testify)

What are we supposed to do? (we are to testify) What reason is given for us to do that? (because we have been with the Advocate from the beginning)

Why has Jesus said these things? (to keep us from stumbling)

What benefit is it for Jesus to go? (it is for our advantage, the Advocate will come to us)

What will the Advocate do when he comes? (he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment.)

What will the Spirit of Truth do? (he will guide you into all the truth; he will speak whatever he hears, he will declare the things that are to come)

Making Connections

After someone leaves you, do you stay in contact and communicate with each other? When have you done that? When have you treated the other person “out of sight, out of mind?” Which do you prefer?

As a disciple, how do you stay in touch with God? When do you feel most connected to God? When do you feel “out of sight, out of mind” with God? How does God stay in contact with you?

Our Lesson Writer states the disciples had a “special role to play because only they had been with Jesus from the beginning.” What was their role? What is your role as a modern-day disciple? What dangers have you encountered along the way?

How do you describe the Spirit? How do you know the Spirit is present in your life? What difference does the presence of the Spirit make in your faith journey?

Our Lesson Writer says, “One aspect of the Spirit’s work would be focused on the world.” Our passage states when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment... What do you think is the purpose of the Spirit’s work in the world?

What do you want the Spirit to reveal or tell you? What are you hoping to hear and learn?

Our Lesson Writer says, “Jesus had revealed much, but also acknowledged that there were things the disciples could not yet bear, or didn’t need to know at that moment.” What examples from your life echo this truth? When did you need to take time to be “right” to hear or learn a certain truth?

So What?

In the large group, ask your group to consider our Lesson Writer's "Hard questions?"

Reading today's text challenges us to ask some hard questions. Though we are from a later generation of disciples, Jesus' words also speak to us.

Have we experienced the presence of the Spirit/Advocate in our lives? How do we know, and how would anyone else notice?"

What difference does the Spirit/Advocate make in our lives?

Why is the Spirit important for us, the modern-day disciples?

The Challenge

Pay attention to the Spirit this week. When you notice the Spirit or when you have Spirit moments, write them down and find someone in your group to share them with. Celebrate your moments and the moments of your partner.

Prayer

Loving God, saying goodbye can be difficult, especially when deep love is involved. Thank you for sending the Spirit to us so we aren't alone. Your love and concern for us is beyond our comprehension. Help us to live in the Spirit everyday. Amen.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

The text—Today’s text jumps backward from our previous studies in Jesus’ “Farewell Discourse,” mainly because it is Pentecost Sunday, and this is where Jesus spoke most about the coming “Advocate.” The Revised Common Lectionary reading skips Jesus’ warning about coming trials in 16:1-4a, but we will include them in this study.

The Advocate—Our text includes several references to the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete/Advocate, illustrating various roles the Spirit will play. The English language has no exact equivalent, which explains the range of translations from “Comforter” to “Helper” to “Counselor” to “Advocate” – and the decision by some to give up and simply transliterate the Greek term as “Paraclete.”

This is not the first time Jesus has used the term: in 14:16-17 he said “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.” Jesus also speaks of sending the Spirit as Paraclete in 16:7: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

Other statements speak more directly to the Paraclete’s purpose. In 16:8-11, Jesus speaks of the Spirit’s ministry as it relates to the world, a more pointed description than a similar reference to the Advocate’s testimony in 15:26-27.

In 16:12-15, the Spirit’s purpose is related more closely to the disciples: the Spirit of truth will teach the disciples what they need to know, and in doing so glorify Christ.

Jesus, the prophet—Predictions such as those in 16:1-4a, that disciples would be put out of synagogues and even killed, contributed to Jesus’ reputation as a prophet as well as the growing conviction that he was the longed-for Messiah.

Hard questions?—Reading today’s text challenges us to ask some hard questions. Though we are from a later generation of disciples, Jesus’ words also speak to us.

Have we experienced the presence of the Spirit/Advocate in our lives? How do we know, and how would anyone else notice?

Can you remember times of particular struggle or trial when you felt the Spirit’s comforting presence in your life – times when you believe you couldn’t have gone on without God’s help?

Have you ever sensed God’s leadership through the Spirit in your life? When? How?

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

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How did Jesus prevent the disciples from stumbling?

The first verses of chapter 16 are worth a closer look. “I have said these things to you,” Jesus said, “to keep you from stumbling.” Whether “these things” refers to the entire preceding discourse (chapters 13-15) or to the more immediate context is unclear. It refers, at least, to the preceding promise that the Advocate would support them as they testified in Jesus’ behalf after his departure.

The word used for “stumbling” is from *skandalizō*, the root of the English word “scandalize.” We relate the word to “scandalous” behavior that is offensive to others, often in association with sexual wrongdoing.

In the New Testament, the word could carry the connotation of causing offense, as in John 6:61, when Jesus asked the disciples if they were offended/scandalized by his teaching that relating discipleship and the hope of eternal life to eating his flesh and drinking his blood (6:47-59).

More commonly, the word suggested the act of causing someone to be tripped up and fall away from faith. Jesus tells his disciples that suffering lies ahead because he wants to prepare them in advance. Jesus doesn’t want them to fall away in fear or confusion when persecutions come, but to find strength in knowing that Jesus told them to expect it.

Many of Jesus’ followers had expected him to act as a military Messiah who would demonstrate great power and lead the Jews to victory over Rome. They had a hard time accepting the idea that Jesus’ victory was over sin and death, rather than any earthly power.

Jesus spoke much of how his ministry had introduced the kingdom of God, but that did not mean all people would suddenly pledge allegiance to Christ and live in peace.

Hard days were coming. As the religious leaders of early Judaism had rejected Jesus, so they would reject the disciples and others who proclaimed the gospel. They would suffer persecution for their faith, and some would even be martyred. Knowing this in advance would not only keep them from being disillusioned, but act as confirmation that Jesus’ other teachings were true, as well. This, in turn, would help them avoid stumbling.