

## “With Jesus in the Upper Room - Lesson #4: Listen to the Holy Spirit”

Scripture: John 14:25-31

Graphics: last supper table, Jesus, chalice, towel, basin

Big Truth: The last moments of Jesus’ earthly relationship with the disciples were in the Upper Room around a table, eating a meal together. Those last moments were Jesus’ opportunity to give the most important lessons he wanted them to know and follow. The people of the Panama UMC are called to sit with Jesus and learn the lessons he taught in order to be the disciples Jesus wants us to be.

Focus Phrase: We listen to the Holy Spirit to remember, find peace, and be empowered.

### 1. Introduction

- A. Have you ever been in this situation?
  - i. In high school or college, you had an exam coming up soon.
  - ii. The problem is, you haven’t started studying yet. AND, you were pretty busy that month and didn’t take very good notes and, honestly weren’t paying that much attention in class.
  - iii. You’re convinced that it’s going to take you longer than the time you have left to learn the material and be fully prepared to take the test...and you’re not even sure you can pass it.
  - iv. So, the panic sets in, and you start worrying about who can help, how to get help, and how to learn the material before the test.
  - v. You feel like you’re alone...you feel like you don’t know a thing or won’t remember what you DO know...you have ZERO peace about the exam, and frankly, your future...and you feel ill-prepared to do anything about it.
  - vi. I mean, this is the stuff of nightmares that can haunt us long after we graduate and move on. I have nightmares that I can’t find my high school locker and when I do, I don’t know the combination for my lock.
- B. The disciples of Jesus, who were seated around the table with Him on the night before he was arrested, had heard Jesus say that he was leaving.
- C. In that moment, they were afraid of being left alone, worried about remembering what Jesus told them to do. They were uneasy about what Jesus was saying, and felt unprepared to do anything about it but ask questions.
- D. We can’t blame them. Jesus said to the disciples in John 14:15, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” So, above and beyond ALL the confusion and questions, Jesus piled on this last commandment and the disciples were in full panic mode. What should they DO?
- E. Yet, Jesus saw the anguish on their faces. Jesus KNEW they were a little freaked out at that moment. Wouldn’t you be a little distressed? Wouldn’t you

be troubled? Wouldn't it kind of feel like you had a test coming up and you didn't study and weren't prepared?

- F. Yet, Jesus said to them, and us, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."
- G. Faith matters...it leads us to God's PRESENCE when we die. Jesus is the WAY to that PRESENCE..and He's the truth and the life for us. It matters that we believe in Jesus so His mission is OUR passionate mission.
- H. BUT HE'S STILL GOING AWAY! The one who has loved us is leaving.
- I. So, that's when Jesus moved us to Lesson #4. See, even though Jesus was going away, he wasn't going to leave them alone. Jesus was sending to them the greatest gift ever...the Holy Cliff Notes...the CHEAT SHEET of ALL CHEAT SHEETS...the way for them to NEVER be alone, or forget what he said, or lose their peace, or feel unprepared.
- J. Jesus would send to them (drumroll)...himself! Wait, what? That's right... Jesus would send himself in the form of HIS SPIRIT to be with them to give them peace, to help them remember all he taught, and to prepare them to do GREATER THINGS than he did.
- K. And, you know what? We have the same Holy Spirit in US!
- L. Lesson #4 With Jesus in the Upper Room is: **Listen to the Holy Spirit!** Let's pray and then open our bibles to John chapter 14:25. You'll notice that we have bibles back in the seats, so you can grab one and follow along!
- M. PRAY!**
- N. JOHN 14:25...here we go!

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ John 14:25

- i. What things? Remember everything that Jesus told them around the table.
  - a. He taught them that He loved them by washing their feet. Be loved!
  - b. He said, "I want you to take second chair and serve and love others."
  - c. Also, "Believe that there's more to this life, and I'm the Way to get there."
- ii. Yet, the implication in his opening words here is that he's leaving and the disciples needed to remember all the important things he told them.
- iii. How? Well...look at the next verse...

### B. READ John 14:26

- i. Jesus started this whole conversation by saying, "Don't let your hearts be troubled."

- ii. Here, he's telling them specifically WHY they didn't have to be worried. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, in Jesus' Name, will keep teaching them AND will remind them of ALL Jesus said to them. Whew!
- iii. The deep concern (the distress) the disciples had about being left alone to fend for themselves, to keep the mission going after Jesus left, was addressed by the PROMISE of the very presence of Jesus' Spirit with them.
- iv. Jesus told the disciples, that they NOW would need to listen to the Holy Spirit. He wasn't going to be there to teach them, physically.
- v. The Greek term here translated as Holy Spirit is actually Paraclete, which means *Called (Para) Alongside (Clete)*. God will send the Called-Alongside One to the believers so that they will have the presence of Jesus with them after Jesus was physically gone.
- vi. That presence would be WITH THEM and would remind them that they're loved, how to love, who Jesus is, what to do for the mission, and more.
- vii. Jesus went on to say that the presence of the Paraclete would do two things: it would **bring peace to their hearts** and it would **prepare them for the mission without Him...**look at verse 27...

### C. READ John 14:27-31

- i. The promise of the Holy Spirit was a promise of peace and preparation for the disciples.
- ii. PEACE
  - a. The peace that Jesus brings is not peace like the world can give. The peace the world can give is one of simply not shooting each other. The peace the world gives is tentative and can be broken in the matter of one harsh word or one rock thrown through a window. It's a false sense of security and simply a temporary end to conflict.
  - b. The peace that Jesus gives is HIS peace. It's a peace that derives from the heart of Jesus' life.
  - c. Rudolph Schnackenburg said the peace of Jesus is "the all-encompassing sphere of his life, his love, and his joy."
  - d. The peace of Jesus is what the Jewish people had been waiting for for thousands of years, and it was now available to the world in Jesus.
  - e. Jesus told the disciples that His peace would come to them and to the whole world through the presence of the Paraclete.
- iii. PREPARATION
  - a. And, the presence of the Paraclete would also give them everything they needed to know to be prepared ahead of time to do what Jesus called them to do going forward.

- b. Jesus told them all they needed to know even before it happened. When it DID happen - when they arrested Jesus, beat him up, and hung him on the cross - they would STILL have peace, and remember what Jesus said. They would still be prepared for what came next. AND, when Jesus rose from the dead, the Paraclete would help them put it all together. Which they did, of course, and the disciples were a mighty force to spread the gospel throughout the world.
- c. It was all because the Paraclete was with them. The church formed, the gospel spread, your great-great-grandparents came to America with the gospel and you're sitting here today because the disciples listened to the Holy Spirit. They passed the test.

### 3. Application

- A. Will we? Church, do we have a sense that the incredible presence of the Jesus in the form of the Holy Spirit is THE greatest gift that we could ever be given as we live out our lives as Jesus' disciples?
- B. Or do we fail to listen to the Holy Spirit and short ourselves by thinking that we have what it takes to pass the test and do what Jesus wants?
- C. God's plan from the very beginning was for you to listen to the Holy Spirit and become more than you think you can be. God wants the Holy Spirit to take you places and change you in ways that you never dreamed of.
- D. What Jesus taught the disciples in Lesson #4 - to Listen to the Holy Spirit - is what he is teaching you too!
- E. Jesus' clear message to you, living on this earth without the physical presence of Jesus is: **Listen to the Holy Spirit.**
- F. Go back to the illustration that has you struggling to remember the lessons that will be on the exam...and thinking that all hope is lost. When it comes to things like loving others, sharing your faith in Jesus, or doing the hard things in faith, do you feel like you have no peace, like you can't remember what to do, or are unprepared?
- G. That's exactly where God wants you to be. When you are I are weak and confused, then we MUST listen to the Holy Spirit to know what Jesus is calling us to do.
- H. As disciples in 2021, who are hearing these critical lessons from Jesus, what does #4 mean to us? What does listening to the Holy Spirit do in our lives?
- I. Before we get to the four things it does, I think we need to talk about HOW to listen to the Holy Spirit.
  - i. Listening to the Holy Spirit is sometimes described as a 'still small voice.' It's a whisper in your ear that is gentle and true, yet clear.

- ii. Listening for and hearing the Holy Spirit is not like hearing a loudspeaker blaring in a concert hall. It's more like tuning the FM dial to the right frequency to clearly hear the signal. (For those who don't know what an FM dial is, ask your grandpa or grandma.)
- iii. Listening to the Holy Spirit requires us to stop long enough to hear. It takes prayer. It takes practice to know when and how the Holy Spirit is speaking.
- iv. Start by talking with others who you're pretty sure are tuned into the Spirit. Ask them how they know it's the Spirit speaking. Most likely they will say something like, "I just feel the Spirit in my thoughts, after I've prayed about it." OR They describe it like, "It's a gut-level feeling that I have learned to respond to." Try it! Pray and ask specifically for God to open your heart and mind to the Holy Spirit. He WILL do that!
- v. And once you pray and begin to tune into the voice of the Holy Spirit working in your heart and mind, then four things happen:
- vi. First, **You Won't Be Alone**
  - a. Jesus' ultimate encouragement to us that his presence is STILL WITH US in the Holy Spirit.
  - b. For so many people, the greatest distress is caused when they experience the silence of God. Prayers go unanswered. We don't hear a thing.
  - c. Yet, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be Called Alongside every believer in Him. You are NOT alone...He is alongside you
  - d. Listen for the presence of Jesus.
- vii. Second, **You Will Remember** what Jesus wants you to do.
  - a. The Spirit will help you recall everything that Jesus taught and did, which will encourage you to keep going.
  - b. If you're like me, I get distracted. I focus on being productive and forget that I'm first simply called to be loved and to love. My plans don't always start with prayer. And I end up forging my way through the task, forgetting that Jesus has something to say about it. Every time!
  - c. Listening to the Holy Spirit reminds you not only of God's presence, but reminds you of God's mission to love the world through you.
  - d. Let everything you do be informed by remembering what Jesus wants.
- viii. Third, (and this one is huge) **You Will Have Peace**
  - a. And I'm not talking about just lack of noise, but the life, love, and joy of Jesus will soak to the deepest parts of You.
  - b. When you listen to the Holy Spirit, you WILL HEAR the Spirit say, "You are loved. No matter what you go through in your life, or how

many times you fail, or what really bad choices you've made... You Are Loved because I am in your life."

- c. It doesn't mean that things will always be calm and quiet, but your spirit will have the pathway to peace, despite the chaos around you.
  - d. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you." Jesus said.
- ix. And lastly, when you listen to the Holy Spirit, **You Will be Ready**
- a. When you listen to the Holy Spirit, you'll be prepared for whatever comes your way in the future.
  - b. There's nothing that will happen to you that you should not be prepared to handle because the Spirit saw it coming.
  - c. The Holy Spirit most likely won't give you specifics, but will keep reminding you that you are loved, keep guiding you into growth as a disciple, and will help you learn to trust more and more.
  - d. The Holy Spirit is also called the Advocate and the Spirit of Truth in John's gospel. You may not know what's coming, but you can trust the One who is with you to be ready for it.
  - e. And when difficult times come, God will have prepared you so that you don't give up or reject God's plan.
  - f. When it's time to celebrate, then you'll give the glory to God with gratitude because it was God and not you who made a way.
- J. When you learn to listen to the Holy Spirit, You will not be alone. You will be reminded of Jesus. You will have Jesus' peace. And You will be prepared for whatever comes your way.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- A. Life is not an exam that we have to pass, thank the LORD, but times of anxiety and worry come to each one of us. The future is never certain for us.
- B. The Holy Spirit is Jesus' appointed teacher and guide in our lives. We don't have to fear the trials that come - the Spirit has been Called Alongside us.
- C. I challenge you today to invite the Holy Spirit to speak louder into your heart and mind than the world around you. Turn off the news and open your bible or bible app. There may be lots of noise going on, but none is more important than the still small voice of God speaking to you. Listen!
- D. That's why Jesus taught the disciples THIS lesson on his last night.
- E. And that's why Jesus wants YOU to listen intently to Him today.
- F. Let's PRAY!