**Sunday 17th May 2020**

**John 14:15-21 – Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

If you have ever seen the behind the scenes video about the making of a film, then you will know that a large number of scenes are created on green screen sets. Actors would have to enter the set and visualise complete scenery with little to no idea what the finished product is going to look like. In some cases, they have to act against a silver ball, or if they a lucky a figurine. They are only given the directions from the director and maybe a quick sketch out drawing of what the set may look like. They have to create this scene with the full faith that the post production teams of editing, visual effects, sound effects and many others, will turn the raw footage of them acting in the green screen set, into a fully functioning, polished, and in most cases realistic scene where the audience can’t tell that the scene was done on a green screen set.

It can be easy to play the part of a Christian in life, but not really believe it, or be fully in the part. If we profess that we love and want to serve our Lord, then we have to dedicate our whole life and desire to it. The New Living Translation Commentary notes: We don’t have to know the future to have faith in God, we have to have faith in God to be secure about the future.

In our Bible reading today of John 14, verse 15 says: “If you love me, obey my commandments.” Love is an important theme within the book of John, so much so that it can be found a total of 56 times. When you love someone, you honour his or her name, and you would never use that name in a demeaning way. Along with this, love and obedience go hand in hand. According to Barclay, it is by Jesus’ obedience, to die on the cross, that he showed his love for God. Jesus honoured God through his words and actions and thus, showed his love for God. Likewise, we too can also show our love to God, not only though our words and actions, but by listening to what God has to say to us and obeying any instructions that he gives to us. Yes, those instructions may be daunting and possibly challenging, but by obeying God and completing the task he sets out for us, we are also honouring God.

However, as we can see in verse 16, God has not just left us with instructions and left us to our own devices. No, after Jesus’ ascension, God provided us another Advocate – The Holy Spirit. God sent it to us, so that we would never be alone, it is to show that he will never leave us. It was sent as a helper, a comforter, a counsellor and monitor. All we are to do is ask, pray, to the Father, bring our burden and joys to Him, and the Holy Spirit will intercede on God’s behalf to assist us in an appropriate way that will ultimately benefit us in the long run.

The first part of verse 17 of our John 14 reading goes into further explanation of the Holy Spirit. “He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth.” Warren Wiersbe, in his commentary states that the Holy Spirit in verse 17 is the Spirit of Truth. “The Spirit inspired the Word and also illumines the Word so we may understand it.” The Spirit is unable to tell any lies and cannot be associated with any lies. It can never lead us to do anything contrary to the Word of God, for God’s Word is truth. This is why the Spirit was sent as a helper and comforter to us, as it cannot be swayed from God’s Word or lead us astray from God’s plan for us.

The second part of verse 17, talks about how the Holy Spirit cannot be seen or felt by those who do not believe in God. That is not to say that the Spirit and God have left the non-believers, as this is definitely not the case, they are always there, but they are unable to truly recognise God and the Holy Spirit for what they are. Barclay states that the point Jesus is making in this verse is that “we can see only what we are fitted to see.” So in this instance, “A person who has eliminated God never listens for him; and we cannot receive the Holy Spirit unless we wait in expectation and in prayer for him to come to us.” The Holy Spirit will only come to us when we are fully willing to receive it.

In verse 18 Jesus is talking to his disciples saying: “No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.” As this particular passage is a part of what Jesus spoke to his disciples during the Last Supper and time before his arrest, this particular verse is threefold, as Jesus was referring to not only his death and subsequent resurrection, He was also referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit, to dwell within the disciples, and us, and it also refers to his second coming, were Jesus will be coming back to the world. We are not abandon by any means by God, the plan for Jesus was set out and went exactly to plan, so that Jesus would not only die for our sins, but that the Holy Spirit would be sent to us and to be with us.

Verses 19 and 20 of John 14 further explain what Jesus said in verse 18 by providing the disciples with details of what was about to happen. As we can see in the verses, Jesus doesn’t directly tell the disciples what is about to happen later that night and during the coming few days, instead Jesus prepares the disciples by indicating that he will die and then be raised to life. Like Jesus with the disciples, God doesn’t always tell us what is going to exactly happen in the future but will tells us what we need to know to prepare for the future. God knows what is going to happen, as he already has the plan (Jer. 29:11), we just need to listen to him and honour him by obeying his instructions.

Verse 21 of our reading is a summary of the previous verses. It is reminding us that “Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me (Jesus). And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” We need to be like the actors who have full faith in their director and post production teams, and trust that God know what he is doing and where he is leading us with our lives.

Jesus has given us the script of how to live a godly life, and through our love, desire and obedience, we want to fulfil our role completely. The reward for us is not some statuette to hold at some awards ceremony, but is our heavenly reward of eternal life with our Lord and Saviour.

Are you following God’s script in your life?