

Reading: John 14v15-31

Theme: God's people safe in the living Saviour.

We are returning to John 14v18-24, to the 5th encouragement we have in this amazing chapter - '***Christ will come back to His own.***' Last time we looked at the 1st heading of 5 - **the importance of the Spirit's work.** There we noted that the Holy Spirit is not directly mentioned, but these verses are in the context of the Holy Spirit being sent, given and His ongoing work and ministry in believers - which is a necessary, great and encouraging work.

The Lord Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to us, to work in us, to make the things of Christ and God real to us, to bring us to new birth, to apply the Saviour and His works to us. Without His work in applying God's word to our lives, the sweet realisation and enjoyment of the things of our faith would not be fully appreciated. Not that we go on feelings alone, for gospel truths are true truths whether we feel them or not, but how precious they are when believed, felt and applied to our lives. Moving on we will see the 4 remaining headings:

2. The great difference between the Church and the world.

Between a most religious, nominal Christian and someone who has been born-again of God's Spirit, there is a world, an eternity of difference. The nominal Christian, no matter how faithful and religious, the churchgoer, the religious person, are all in the same state before God as those who have never made any attendance at church, have no interest in religion, or have no Christian background. No matter

how moral or religious they are, they are lost and they are included the term “world” which we read in v17,19 and 22. The world, or any person not born of God’s Spirit will not see the glorified Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Jesus’ physical presence has been removed and the world, also believers, cannot see Him physically. Yet the Spirit’s coming to believers will reveal the things of Christ, will reveal Christ to them and bring these things home to their spiritual hearts, understanding and eyes.

Here is the great difference between the Church and the world. A believer has been given eternal life, born-again of God’s Spirit, have their spiritual eyes and understanding opened and they are now able to see things they never realised before. It is not just church, or religious rituals, or doing this or that; it is now knowing the new life given to all who believe in the Lord Jesus and we are seeing things we never knew or realised before.

The most religious, moral, churchgoing persons are blind to the things of God, are spiritually dead, have their hearts, minds and understanding darkened by the devil. They need, as much as the worst person alive, a supernatural work by God the Holy Spirit to open their eyes and bring new life - regeneration, to be born-again. Without such we will never see, let alone enter the kingdom of God. For us, watching or listening, this is important to note. You may be someone with the privilege of a Christian upbringing, teaching, be very nice and moral people, whether you are young or older, but you need to question whether you have had your eyes opened, been given new life and can behold, see the

Saviour's glory. Yes, we may have felt moved, or prayed a prayer, but question was it really a life-giving, life changing work of God the Spirit that occurred or only a phase?

There is this great difference between the Church and the world - seeing Christ with opened spiritual eyes. The contrast is as great, if not greater than that between a statue of a person and the living person themselves. Recognise there is this great difference, but now see:

3. The absolute safety of the Church.

Where does our safety lie as a believe? In our feelings? Thankfully that is not the case - as we can be so up and down, our feelings be all over the place even on the same day. Neither is it what we do or achieve or understand. Our safety lies in the fact that Jesus Christ lives – v19b. The importance of Jesus' resurrection is emphasised here. Our Lord Jesus died to remove our sin and its punishment from us, to cleanse us. He was raised for our justification. He ascended to heaven and He ever lives to save to the uttermost all who go to Him; He ever lives to make intercession for us - ones like you and me are prayed for by the Saviour Himself and all our cares, situations, confusion, lives, fears and such things are known to Him and He knows what is right and best for us because He loves us more than we could ever imagine or think.

Our spiritual life is absolutely guaranteed because of His life. Our security, eternal life and safety are tied into His living. If Jesus had not risen from the dead and what kind of a Saviour would He be? We would have no hope of sins

forgiven, of peace or being right with God. There would be no hope beyond death, no hope of the resurrection, no new life. All we would have is a moral code, and example of a good man who died a tragic death.

Thankfully and praise God, He has risen to endless life; Christ's life secures the eternal life of His believing people. Our hope is a living hope which can be known and enjoyed in this life, but on death we will most fully enter into it. We have the hope of heaven and the wondrous hope of the resurrection.

He is the head of the body and we are in union with Him; we share His life. This union is an unbreakable and indissoluble union - joined once to Christ and forever joined to Him.

As long as Christ lives, so shall we. We cannot lose the spiritual life He has given us - unless Christ is dragged from heaven and His life destroyed - but since He is God, it is impossible and we are eternally safe in union with Christ

Often, we fail to remember our privileges. We forget where we are in Christ - alive in Him. We can have a belief in such truth as right and true, but as the Holy Spirit applies and drives home these truths to our hearts and lives, what precious, precious truths they become and are alive within us. While our Head lives, there is no danger we will perish or be lost if we are born-again of His Spirit - by whom we are in union with Him and He with us. The Church and believers are absolutely safe. These verses also show us:

4. The need of active practical love to Christ.

Again, we are in the area of our love for Christ causing us to obey His commands. If we say we are born of God's Spirit, have His new life, know and behold the Saviour, have this eternal life because we are united with Him, then these incredible, marvellous realities and truths are to affect our lives on a day by day basis. Our love for Him is to show itself, manifest itself in active practical obedience. It is not enough to say "*Oh how I love Jesus*" and do nothing, or do that which openly causes such love to be put in doubt and question. We touched on this when we looked at v15 - but it is right, even necessary to remind ourselves of these truths and the principles they contain.

Our loving obedience is the best test of our love for Christ. Good feelings, high emotions and desires are useless unless accompanied by obedient action to honour and to please our God and Saviour. The Holy Spirit will always, along with new life and revealing Christ, bring a desire to please Christ, to live a holy and godly life and so to glorify Christ.

Such ones who live and show this practical obedient love, are encouraged with promises of special comforts and blessings from God - v21 & 23 "*Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him... If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*" Here is something glorious. I don't propose to try and attempt to

scale its glorious heights, but we do have examples in Scripture of those who are eminently pleased God by their obedient walk and enjoyed many enjoyments from such holiness - Enoch and Abraham being just two examples. Holiness brings great joy and blessing with it and we are to realise there is more of heaven on earth to be enjoyed than we presently know.

Why is it then that so many live in a poor dying rate? Surely it comes back practical loving obedience - obedience and love coupled together. We need to take notice of Christ's words here. There is a close connection between loving obedience i.e. holiness and the smile of God's face. We are to make His smile our greatest joy and His frown our greatest fear.

To be honest, these words are searching and probing and we would do well to lay our lives, motives, desires and thoughts before Him, as well as asking Him to search us, to create clean, pure and obedient loving hearts within us.

5. The danger of rejecting Christ's word.

In v24 we have set down before us the same truth, but now it is in a negative way. If we do not lovingly obey Jesus, we show that we do not love Him. If we have no love for Jesus, then how can we be born of His Spirit and therefore we are to assume we are lost and perishing. It is bad enough to be lost, to show such by our continual active disobedience (*not lapses and falls into sin that happened to us all*), but actively remaining in disobedience. We learn that the greatest children of God have fallen into sin - David's

adultery, murder and lying; Abraham's lying, carnal reasoning and practice; Noah getting blind drunk; Peter's denial of Jesus; His disciples running away and abandoning Jesus.

Here Jesus warns of hostility of heart towards Him and His ways. It may not even be an open hostility - it could be that we have no love for Jesus and yet we are happy to, or appear happy to go along with the morals, the standards of Christ, but these are not done out of love for Christ. You could have a different motivation. A Christian will be motivated to obedience by love for Christ alone and to keep His commands - even if it is inconvenient, or seemingly impractical.

Not only does no love and habitual disobedience show any spiritual life, it also shows us that we are rejecting Christ's word, teaching. Yet it is not His teaching in isolation, but the things He taught and said were those given Him by His Father and so we reject the Father's word. If you were in the forces, to ignore an important officer's commands was not a good idea! Indeed, it is foolish, but to reject or ignore Christ's word and commands is to reject God the Father's words and we are rejecting the teaching of Almighty God the Father and God the Son. It is serious matter - an eternally serious matter!

Sadly, so many people reject Jesus and His teachings as out of date, not applicable to them or to modern day life, but they fail to realise they are rejecting God's word - the Father and Son agree on such, the Holy Spirit knows it was right

to record such in the Bible for us to know. We are fools to the well-being of our own eternal souls if we neglect or reject such teaching.

Consider the gospel invitations, the gospel imperatives commanding us to believe and be saved. Reject them at your own peril. Consider the tender words of Scripture *“Come unto me, all you who are weary and I will give you rest”*; *“Come now, let us reason together...”*? What amazing words from the Almighty, holy God! What about the commands, the promises for good, or the threatenings and thundering’s of God’s word - don’t they move you? They should do and cause you to consider what this God is saying to you!

There is this danger of rejecting Christ’s word, of rejecting the gospel. Because if we do so, we despise the one sat on the throne of the universe and what He says. One day we will have to answer to Him.

Here is this warning and challenge sounded even at the end of an area of encouragement - what a stark contrast! Here there is tremendous encouragement to all who know and love the Lord Jesus - He will not leave us as orphans or abandoned; He will come to us - His people - to help, comfort, encourage and even discipline us. I pray we would all know such comfort in our lives as we know Christ and know that He is with us in everything we go through in our daily lives in this confusing crisis and situation.