

Session 4 How Jesus Prepares Us To Overcome Offense (Jn. 16:5-7)

“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)

I. OUR PROTOTYPE: THE PREPARATION AND PRESSURES OF THE EARLY CHURCH

- A. **Premise:** How Jesus prepared the early church for pressure on Tuesday (Mt. 24-25) and Thursday (Jn. 13-17) is the prototype for the end-time Church. He taught them how to overcome a troubled heart (14:1) and offense (stumbling or falling away; 16:1). He reminded them that they would encounter persecution (15:18-16:4), and that God’s purposes unfold in ways that are radically different from what His disciples expect (16:5). So much was about to change suddenly for them.

¹⁹“...the world hates you...²⁰they will persecute you...^{16:1}**These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble [fall away]...⁵But now I go away to Him who sent Me...” (Jn. 15:19-16:5)**

- B. There was a great difference between what happened as compared to what the apostles had expected. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of Man prophesied in Daniel 7:13-14. They assumed that He was going to overthrow the Roman Empire, establish His global kingdom, and usher in Israel’s national salvation and glory as prophesied in Isaiah 60-62 and more. I assume that they felt sure that final revolution against evil had started and they would soon rule with Him.

¹³“...One like the Son of Man...¹⁴to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all nations...should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion...” (Dan. 7:13-14)

1. About one month before Jesus entered Jerusalem, He spoke of the apostles sitting on thrones.

²⁷**Peter said...**, “**See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?”**

²⁸**Jesus said...**, “**In the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will sit on twelve thrones...judging...Israel.**” (Mt. 19:27-28)

2. On Tuesday of His final week, He spoke of sitting on His throne of glory to judge all nations.

³¹“**When the Son of Man comes in His glory...then He will sit on the throne of His glory.**”

³²**All the nations will be gathered before Him.**” (Mt. 25:31-32)

- C. **Seven principles in John 16:1-7:** Jesus prepared them with truths so that they would not fall away;
#1 They must remember biblical teaching about persecution (16:4)—why and what are its benefits.
#2 They must not be offended by sorrowful events they did not expect, e.g., His departure (16:5a).
#3 They must focus on God’s eternal purposes in Jesus going to the Father (16:5a).
#4 They must be confident in God’s good leadership as seen in sending Jesus and the Spirit (16:5b).
#5 They must ask right questions to God about any surprising events that cause sorrow (16:5b).
#6 They must focus on advantages (16:7)—the Spirit in us and on (intimacy, insight, eschatology).
#7 They must seek understanding of aspects of God’s heavenly government that were not yet clear.

¹“**These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble [fall away]...**”

⁴“**These things I have told you, that...you may remember that I told you of them...⁵But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ ⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away...if I depart, I will send Him [Spirit]...” (Jn. 16:1-7)**

D. **That you should not stumble** (16:1): One primary issue that Jesus emphasized to the apostles (Mt. 26:31; Jn. 16:1) and the disciples of John the Baptist (Mt. 11:2-6) was their propensity to *stumble* (NAS), or to be *offended* (KJV, Webster Translation), or *to fall away* (ESV, NIV, RSV). The Greek, “stumble,” (*skandalizo*) means to fall away or be offended.

³¹...“**All of you will be made to stumble [*skandalizo*] because of Me this night.**” (Mt. 26:31)

¹⁰“**Then many will be offended [*skandalizo*], will betray one another...**” (Mt. 24:10)

1. Jesus spoke of the blessing of not being offended when sorrowful events unfold in a way that His disciples do not expect. The disciples of John the Baptist (the premier forerunner) were not full-prepared for the unexpected sorrowful events related to the coming of the Messiah.

²**John...from prison...sent two of his disciples ³and said to Him, “Are You the One...?”**

⁴**Jesus answered..., “Tell John...⁵the blind see and the lame walk...and the deaf hear...**

⁶**Blessed is he who is not offended [*skandalizo*] because of Me.” (Mt. 11:2-6)**

2. Our greatest danger is not in being persecuted but in being offended and falling away (16:1). The most tragic reality in history is the end-time falling away from the faith. Paul prophesied a falling away in the end times (2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; cf. Rom. 11:22; 1 Tim. 5:15; Heb. 3:12; 6:4-6; 10:26-31, 39; Jas. 5:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 20-22; 3:17).

³**Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [*Jesus’ return*] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [*the Antichrist*] is revealed... (2 Thes. 2:3)**

¹**Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...** (1 Tim. 4:1)

3. Many will be offended when facing the Tribulation pressures that Jesus spoke about Tuesday (Mt. 24:21). Many are biblically illiterate of His end-time narrative. John spoke of one half of the earth’s population dying—initially one-fourth (Rev. 6:8), then another third (Rev. 9:13).

²¹“**There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world...**

²⁹**Immediately after the tribulation...³⁰all the tribes of the earth...will see the Son of Man coming on clouds...³¹He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together [*rapture*] His elect...from one end of heaven to the other.” (Mt. 24:21-31)**

E. **#1 Remember** (15:20; 16:4): We must remember biblical teaching about persecution—it will come to all nations (Mt. 24:9)—and why God allows it, what benefits result to His people from it, etc.

F. **#2 They must not be offended**: They did not expect to hear of His death when He said, “*I go away.*” (16:5). We are more vulnerable to being offended by sorrowful events if we do not expect them.

⁵“**I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’” (Jn. 16:5)**

1. **Unexpected sorrows**: Jesus’ declaration that He was going away highlighted the fact that some circumstances would suddenly change in dramatic ways that would cause them sorrow.

2. **Jesus’ personal joy**: They were to rejoice that He was going to the Father (14:28).

²⁸“**If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father’...**” (Jn. 14:27)

- G. **#3 Focus on God's eternal purposes** (16:5): Jesus embraced God's "big picture," eternal kingdom plans in going to "Him who sent Me" that resulted in our salvation and living in the Father's house forever (14:1). The supremacy of the Father's will and eternal plans was His top priority and focus.
- H. **#4 Confidence in God's good leadership** (16:5): In saying, "I go to Him who sent Me," Jesus pointed them to the Father's good leadership which has been proven over and over. It was the Father's idea to send Jesus (16:5) and the Spirit (15:26) so we can be sure that He is fully attentive and engaged with us in our struggles. *God so loved the world that He sent His only Son and also sent the Spirit* (Jn. 3:16; 14:26). His banner over me is love (Song 2:4). His leadership is perfect. Thinking rightly about God's leadership is essential to being prepared to overcome offense.
- I. **#5 Ask the right questions** (16:5b) to God about what causes sorrow. Resist complaining about it. As we engage in the right conversation with God by asking right questions, we receive insight.
1. **None of you asks Me, "Where are You going?"** (16:5): They were asking the wrong questions. He gave them insight on how to approach unexpected changes that cause sorrow.
 2. John 16:5 seems to contradict that both Peter (13:36) and Thomas (14:5) asked this question. The disciples knew the fact of His leaving but were too preoccupied with what they felt they were losing to ask the right questions in order to grasp the implications of Jesus going to the Father. Their questions were about how hard their life might be in light of this sudden sorrowful change. They were subtly protesting the fact of Jesus departing from them.
- J. **Sorrow has filled your heart** (16:6): Jesus spoke of His death, which filled them with great sorrow. There is a paradox between our "temporary sorrows" and our "ultimate advantages." Jesus knew that they were only focused on their temporal sorrow and that they overlooked the truths that would fill them with joy. Jesus was departing to enter the Father's glory (14:28) and to prepare a place for them to be with Him forever (14:2). Sorrow filled their heart due to being told two new things—that their adversaries would put Jesus to death (16:5) and later would kill them (16:2).
- K. **#6 Focus on our advantages** (16:7a): The Spirit in us and on (intimacy, insight, eschatology, etc.) instead of focus on sorrows (16:6). Whatever God plans or allows is for our advantage (Rom. 8:28).
1. **It is to your advantage** (16:7): Because of His death, Jesus could send the Spirit to them, they would be much closer to Him and He could communicate to them in a much greater way. The Spirit leads us into intimacy (15:1-17) and insight into God's heart and plans (15:26; Mt. 24). The Spirit will write God's Word on our heart and mind (Heb. 10:16) in transforming us.
*¹⁶"I will put My laws into their hearts [emotions], and in their minds I will write them."
(Heb. 10:16)*
 2. When persecuted, we can be transformed by the Spirit for our benefit in this age (Dan. 11:35; 1 Pet. 4:1) and the age to come (2 Cor. 4:17) as He releases the spirit of glory (1 Pet. 4:14).
*¹⁷Our...affliction...is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.
(2 Cor. 4:17)*
¹...he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ²that he no longer should live... for lusts...¹⁴If you are reproached...the Spirit of glory...rests on you... (1 Pet. 4:1-2, 14)

- L. **Nevertheless I tell you the truth** (16:7; 14:6; 18:37): Jesus tells the truth about His end-time plans to prepare His people to overcome offense—thus, He included things that bring temporary sorrow.
1. An angel told John “to eat” the little book (Rev. 10:9). John found it as sweet as honey as he feasted on the biblical narrative of the end times yet he felt bitter in grasping its sorrowful implications. John prophesied to nations (10:11) by what he wrote in Revelation 6-22.
⁹...he [the angel] said to me, “Take and eat it [the prophetic book]...”¹⁰I took the little book... and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey...but when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. ¹¹And he said...“You must prophesy about many...nations (Rev. 10:9-11)
 2. Paul spoke the popular and unpopular truths and lived in the tension of sorrow with rejoicing.
²⁰...I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it...²⁶I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷For I have not shunned to declare...the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:20-27)
¹⁰[we are] as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich. (2 Cor. 6:10)
- M. **#7 They must seek understanding** of aspects of God’s heavenly government that were not yet clear. Jesus said, **“If I depart, I will send Him** (16:7): The Spirit was not given until Jesus went rose from the dead (Acts 2:33). This aspect of God’s plan was not obvious to the disciples. In a similar way, God has plans for the end-time Church that are not immediately obvious to us today. There will be surprising developments and breakthroughs in God’s plans that are not yet revealed (Rev. 10:4).
³³Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He [Jesus] poured out this which you now see and hear. (Acts 2:33)
⁴I heard a voice...saying...“Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered...” (Rev. 10:4)

II. WHY ARE THESE 7 PRINCIPLES SO IMPORTANT?

- A. God will shake all things (Heb. 12:27), resulting in the removal of many things causing sorrow. Only that which is “rooted” in Jesus and His eternal values will remain in His end-time shakings.
²⁶...He promised...I will shake...the earth...²⁷[this] indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken...that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. (Heb. 12:26-27)
- B. Jesus urged His disciples to cultivate deep “roots” in their relationship to Him and His purposes so they would not stumble or be offended (Mt. 13:21). Paul exhorted us to be rooted in God (Col. 2:7).
²⁰...he immediately receives it [Word] with joy; ²¹yet he has no root in himself...when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles [skandalizo]. (Mt. 13:20-21)
- C. Intimacy and eschatology (the biblical narrative of the end times rooted in an eternal perspective) are foundational to overcoming a troubled heart (14:1) and not stumbling (16:1). We need a *paradigm shift* from a temporal paradigm of Christianity to a New Testament eternal kingdom perspective where believers intentionally seek to live for the age to come. We must shift our *primary focus* from seeking blessing only on temporal circumstances to focus on the eternal kingdom—to intentionally make decisions that have *eternal consequences and benefits*. About one hour earlier when Jesus said, “Do not your heart be troubled” (14:1), He first emphasized that they would live with Him in the Father’s house (14:2) to anchor them in an eternal perspective.