

AHH LIFE!

REFLECTING ON JESUS' UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE

Water from Rock, December 5, 2017, Tim Smith

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

John 10:10

INTRODUCTION

In this series we focus on what is customarily called "The Upper Room Discourse", or, Jesus' teaching in the Upper Room (and prayer afterwards) a few hours before He died. In John 13-17 Jesus describes how followers can now live in God's "eternal life", zoe aionios, ("life of the age to come").

JOHN 15:15 – 27 THE IMPORTANCE OF ABIDING IN JESUS

I. ABIDING IN JESUS MEANS FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM 15:15-17

¹⁵*I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.*

A. In Jesus' first century world the term "friend" was not used loosely. "Friendship" (Latin: Amicitia) meant a devoted, intimate relationship. New Testament scholar Gary Burge says when Jesus takes the step of calling His disciples "*friends*" He is "reframing his relationship with his followers in terms they would have recognized." (Gary Burge, *A Week in the Life of A Roman Centurion*)

B. In just hours Pontius Pilate will be challenged whether he is a "friend of the emperor": *If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor*" (John 19:12b). "Friend of the emperor" (amicusu Caesaris) was a technical term reserved for senators, knights and administrators who were meritorious and thus favored by the emperor." (A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*) As a likely "friend of the emperor" Pilate was

expected to act in his interests.

- C. *"I have called you friends.."* "Ancient ideals of friendship included intimacy and the sharing of the secrets of one's heart in confidence." (NIV Cultural Background Study Bible).
- D. That is the backdrop of the evening as Jesus' declares, *"I do not call you servants any longer...but I have called you friends."* With these words Jesus bestows on His followers the dignity and authority of being His representatives in the world. He has specially chosen them to be His emissaries speaking on behalf of the King of Kings: *"You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last."* Having been chosen by Jesus to go and bear fruit can give confidence the *"Father will give whatever you ask in my name."*
- E. Because they are His friends Jesus tells them *"everything"* He has heard from the Father. He holds nothing back. He kept no secrets. This means that we await no further revelation from God. Jesus has revealed Him to us.
- F. Friendship with Jesus has great implications for prayer. *"Whenever we sense that we are walking on eggshells with a friend, we know that friendship is in trouble, because we are skirting some sensitive issue that makes it difficult to be honest with each other. Friendship develops through mutual honesty, through truth telling or transparency, doesn't it? I'm convinced that the friendship God wants of us and offers to us develops similarly."* William Barry, *Praying the Truth*)
- G. *"You did not choose me but I chose you."* Friends of Jesus must know they are "chosen" not for privilege but for service. Israel had made the mistake of thinking they were chosen for privilege status instead of service to the world.

II. ABIDING IN JESUS MEANS HATRED BY THE WORLD 15:18-25

¹⁸ *If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you.* ¹⁹ *If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you.* ²⁰ *Remember the word that I said to you, "Servants not greater than their master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.* ²¹ *But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.* ²² *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.* ²³ *Whoever hates me hates my Father also.* ²⁴ *If I had not done among them the works that no one else*

*did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.*²⁵*It was to fulfil the word that is written in their law, "They hated me without a cause."*

- A. Because branches share the life of the Vine they will receive what the Vine receives, i.e. the sunshine and rain, love from the Father and the hatred of the Father's enemies. Compare Jesus words to His disciples: *See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves.*" (Matthew 10:16a)
- B. Friends of Jesus will bear the world's hatred of Jesus, because like Him, they are not of this world. "The cosmos world is that system organized by Satan, headed by Satan and run by Satan which leaves God out and is a rival." (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*)
- C. Jesus' friends will experience the rebellion of the world against the Father Himself. There is something much bigger than them occurring.
- D. Persecution will not happen outside God's providential care, but will fulfill Scripture: *"It was to fulfil the word that is written in their law, "They hated me without a cause"* (quoting Psalm 69:4).
- E. "In the measure in which you and I are Christians we are in direct opposition to all the maxims which rule the world and make it a world. What we believe to be precious it regards as of no account. What we believe to be fundamental truth it passes by as of little importance. Much which we feel to be wrong it regards as good. Our jewels are its tinsel, and its jewels are our tinsel. We and it stand in diametrical opposition of thought about God, about self, about duty, about life, about death, about the future; and that opposition goes right down to the bottom of things...If you want to escape the hostility drop your flag, button your coat over the badge that shows that you belong to Christ, and do the things that the people round about you do, and you will have a perfectly easy and undisturbed life." (Alexander MacLaren, *John*)
- F. We cannot be friends of Jesus without drawing opposition from those who hate Him.

III. ABIDING IN JESUS MEANS EMPOWEERMENT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REPRESENT HIM IN THE WORLD. 15:26-27

²⁶ *When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.* ²⁷*You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.*

- A. Even though the cosmos world will reject Jesus, the Spirit will enable His friends to bear witness to Him. It will be a witness divine and

human. Note: the Greek word for “witness” is martyr.