

***Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you***

This discourse began with Jesus' reassuring words to his disciples "Let not your hearts be troubled..." (14.1). These words are repeated in v. 27, with the addition of "neither let them be afraid." How remarkable it is that when Jesus faces his own most terrible hour, his concern is not for himself but for his disciples. How will they cope when they see him abused, crucified and taken from them? He is anxious to set their



hearts at rest. To do that he must explain to them heavenly things, things of the Spirit (cf. 3.12). It is only as spiritual truths that what follows makes sense - about the Spirit dwelling with them but not the world (16f.), Jesus coming to them (as a Father, 18), their seeing Jesus but the world not seeing him (19), Jesus being alive and they being alive (19). When they grasp these spiritual truths the problem Philip had with seeing the Father (8) will be resolved. Not only will they understand the Father-Son relationship, they will enter into it themselves (20).

This time it is the remaining Judas who speaks first. He's still grappling with the third truth expressed above (22). Jesus explains, as he did to Nicodemus, that it is only as the Holy Spirit gives understanding that all these things will be remembered and truly comprehended. John, the writer, has that Spirit-given hindsight, and records these words faithfully. He is bound to because Jesus has now said twice that once these things have taken place, and they understand them, they will believe in him (29, cf. 13.29). In other words, Jesus speaks these things both to bring as much comfort now as their limited understanding allows, and to give them confidence - after his departure and the sending of the Holy Spirit - that he indeed knew what he was talking

about. It was truth!

What allows the disciples to know and experience these truths, albeit only in part before Pentecost, is the fact that they know Jesus (17). It is this that sets them apart from the world, which is in complete spiritual darkness. This is more than head knowledge, as Jesus goes on to clarify. To know Jesus is to love him, and to love him is to obey him, keeping his word (15-17, 20-24). It is this kind of love that binds the disciple to Jesus and the Father. It is not the world's love.

It is a love that has already been demonstrated, perfectly, by Jesus (25-30). His constant, perfect obedience to the Father is the proof of his love for his Father. He has never said or done anything apart from the Father. This has been his consistent message to both his opponents and his friends. The ruler of this world, the devil, may appear to be taking control, but that is not the case (30). What is about to happen is Jesus' final, voluntary act of obedience, the ultimate testimony to his love for the Father. In spite of the horror of the cross the disciples should rejoice that he returns to the Father (28). It's best for him, and it will prove best for them too.

### **To ponder**

How does your obedience to God testify to your love for him?

### **To pray**

Father, grant that according to the riches of Christ's glory I might be strengthened with power through his Spirit in my inner being, that I may love as he loves, and be filled with your fullness. Amen

### **Reflections**