Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Peace: A By-Product of Faith, Hope, and Love, Part 2
Scripture: John 16:28-33
Code: 1563

Turn in your Bibles to the sixteenth chapter of John. We want to consider the remaining portion of chapter 16, we've entitled this message, "Peace: A Product of Faith, Hope and Love." And really that's what peace is. We discussed the beginning, verses 25, 26 and 27 of this entire passage which really comes as one unit and we talked about the void that is in man's soul. We talked about the fact that in every man's soul there are three missing ingredients and they are just these three that are discussed here by Jesus...love, faith and hope. That men desire something to love and be loved by, something and someone to believe in, and something to hope for and apart from these three things man has no reason to exist, he has no escape from the human dilemma. Life becomes a meaningless treadmill. And it is the plight of twentieth-century man and it is the plight really of every man to search for these realities.

Stephen Evans has written a little book entitled *Despair*and in this book he talks about much of this. And he says that perhaps the uniqueness of the twentieth century man is his kill power. His uniqueness may be in the fact that death becomes extremely stark because it is so easy for man to wipe out the entire population of the world in a matter of months at the most. We can kill by both the bomb, germ warfare, biological warfare, as it's known, chemical warfare, pollution, and other areas.

But no matter how vast you get in your consideration of death and how sort of gigantic everything appears, the great horror that man lives with is the fear of his own personal individual death. The real horror of life is not that man must die, the real horror of life is that I must die. That's the real horror. The great fear that enters into the heart of every man is the inevitability of death. And from the perspective of the individual man, from His beginnings, death has always been the grim specter. And twentieth-century man, though unique in many areas, is no different than any man in any century, he must also face death. And he will die only once and he will die by himself whether he is surrounded by his family in a hospital bed or whether he's accompanied by the entire human race in a nuclear holocaust, man will die absolutely by himself. And since man in our day has wiped out God, since God is dead in man's mind, man faces the universe, faces his problems and faces the absolute loneliness of death all by himself. He has eliminated all of his hope when he eliminated God.

Who really loves him then? Whom can he believe in and trust for his eternal destiny? What can he really hope for beyond this world? Without God there is nothing. And because there is nothing, there is no peace in that kind of heart. No man can know peace in a heart that has no answers to those

questions. But we saw last week that these three things are precisely what Jesus offers to every man. The beauty of the gospel is that it is these three made accessible to you and to me. Jesus offers love, He offers faith and He offers hope. And by these three things peace. Paul said, you remember, "And these three abide, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love."

And it is exactly those three things that Jesus speaks of in our text. He offers to every man a divine love, someone and something to believe in, and a hope that is steadfast and sure and eternal. And when a man has all of those things, a man has peace.

Now last week we saw, first of all, that Jesus offered love, the greatest of all three. Look at verse 25 and I'll just read them in review. "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs, or poignant pointed sayings, veiled sayings, that the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs but I will show you plainly of the Father." Jesus says I've been speaking to you in *paroimias* , veiled sayings, that the time is coming...we know that time to be the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit arrives to dwell within them...the time is coming when He no more will speak to them in *paroimias*, or veiled sayings but will show them plainly the things concerning God." Verse 26, "At that day...again the day of Pentecost when the Spirit comes...ye shall ask in My name and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you." At that day every Christian will have instant and immediate access into God's presence, they will not have to ask Jesus to ask God, they will go to God directly in the name of Jesus Christ. And the reason for this, given in verse 27, and this is the concept of love that we wanted you to get, "For the Father Himself loves you because ye have loved Me and have believed that I came out from God."

Now there you have the basis of a love relationship with God. First of all, God loves us, the Bible says. John 3:16, in an *agape*general sweeping universal kind of love that is His nature to give. But the word here is *phileo*which means to love in an intimate affectionate way as a member of a family. And so it is that God has a general divine love for all men, but He has an intimate warm family affection for those who love Jesus Christ. And the reason that verse 26 is true, the reason God hears and answers your prayers directly is because of that love for you. And when a man discovers that God, the infinite cosmic God of the universe loves him, then he has reason to exist. Then all of the mystery of the universe becomes logical and he can see that God has created all these things to display His glory that man might in viewing all of God's glory turn to God and express his love to God and know that love which God desires to express in return.

And so, Jesus is saying here that they are loved of the Father in a unique kind of family affection, caring kind of warm intimate love, different than the divine sweeping love which encompasses every man. And we saw that to be loved by God is the pinnacle of value. We said that love is merely a system of evaluation. Love is putting a price on something. And those you love the most have the highest prices perhaps are even priceless. And God has valued you to the degree that He not only

loves you with a divine love, sweeping love, but He loves you with a warm tender family affection, that's how valuable you are to God. And to be valued by God, and mark it well, my friends, this is what the world wants to hear, this is the message we need to give, to be valued by God is the pinnacle of existence. And it's a shocking thing to even realize, the great God of the universe even cares about us let alone has a warm, tender affectionate love for every one of us. But He does. Everyone who loves Jesus Christ is beloved of the Father. God is not a cosmic indifference, He is a personal loving Father who gives to man an infinite and eternal value by loving man with an infinite and eternal love. With all of our sin and all of our selfishness and all of our rebellion, God yet loves us. And the fantastic thing about it is it's an unconditional love.

Now in order for you and I to know that love, it's very simple. Verse 27 says, "You have loved Me," according to what Jesus is saying, this refers to Him, "and believe that I came out from God." When you love Jesus Christ and believe in His deity, that He came out from God to accomplish a redemptive work, that is sufficient for salvation and the love of the Father. And we saw back in chapter 14 verse 21 this same principle repeated twice, I just want to review it. It says in verse 21, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he that is that loveth Me and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father." In other words, God will love those who love Christ. And you can tell whether you love Christ or not by whether you obey His commandments.

Somebody comes along and says, "Well, I love Jesus Christ," and then lives like they couldn't even care less about Jesus Christ, you can evaluate them in the light of John 14:21 and say, "If you really love Jesus, you'd keep His commandments, evidently you don't love Him, consequently you're not loved of the Father." Your love to Christ becomes evident in your obedience. Obedience is the key to the entire Christian life, it's everything...it's everything in the Christian life, obedience in terms of the human side. And so Jesus says then if you keep My commandments you prove you love Me, and if you love Me, My Father will love you.

Verse 23 repeats the same thing. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words and My Father will love him." So the principle is obvious. If you believe in Jesus Christ and if you love Jesus Christ, you enter into a unique kind of love relationship with a cosmic God that is just beyond belief. Now as I said, last week every man is loved by God, every man is valuable. But those who love Christ are even more priceless because they enjoy that intimate love relationship with God that gives them an additional worth.

In Ephesians chapter 2 I think we're introduced to this concept perhaps in a little different light. Paul says this in reference to God, "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This is what happens when you're saved, you're raised up to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." In other words, God has designed to lift us up and show us His kindness in a special way because we belong to Christ. Back in verse 4 it says, "God

who is rich in mercy for His great love with which He loved us." The tremendous unsearchable riches of the mercy and love of God lift us up to a place of eternal kindness to be the recipients of all God's blessings forever.

So when a man looks at the lovely Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, God loving and infinite sacrifice, and that man believes in Jesus Christ, and begins to love Christ in return, then God responds to that with a gentle, caring love, different than that universal kind of love with which He loves every man. Perhaps it's the difference between, in a human sense, my love for a people such as yourselves which is a real love and a legitimate love and the intimacy of my love for my own family. Each is a love in its own degree. And so it is that God loving all men, yet has a special and unique love for those who are Jesus Christ's own.

This is the worth of man. I've told you this story before but it fits so well, let me tell it to you again. I'll never forget when I was in some of the prisons in Mississippi preaching to some of the young people, black young people. And to show you how important it is that a man feel his worth, we came across one boy who...who had devalued himself tremendously all through his life. He had never had a family. He didn't know who his mother was, or who his father was, lived in orphanages and been passed around and he had acquired the name Saddy somewhere along the line. And we were talking to him and he said his name was Saddy and that's all, just Saddy. They had given him a last name but all he ever knew was Saddy cause he was always sad. He said, "There is no God, God doesn't love me, nobody loves me. All that you've been preaching and talking about is a lie." We spent about 45 minutes with him and he came out of this room after he had talked to one of the young men who was on our little team and he had a smile from ear to ear and he was just beaming, you know. And he ran over to me and he grabbed my hand and he started pumping it, and pumping it and saying, "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

And I said, "For what?"

He said, "Well I just learned something."

I said, "What did you learn?"

He said, "I learned that God loves me and you love me."

See, I'll never forget those words. And it transformed his life because all of a sudden he had some value. All of a sudden he mattered. God loved him. No wonder men feel the meaninglessness of life if there's no loving God. If you want to cross out God, if you want to X out God, you've got no reason to exist and you're...you'll know nothing but waste. To be loved is the crown of life. To be loved is the chief clue to the meaning of existence and that's really where it all begins.

In fact, the Bible says, "Love your neighbor as yourself," and you can't really love your neighbor unless you love yourself. You can't estimate him correctly unless you have the right valuation on your own life. You're priceless to God.

All right, so there's the first commodity that Jesus offers. Let's look at the second one which is faith, and we'll get in to what we want to say particularly today. And this is very, very simple that I trust the Spirit of God will apply it to your hearts. Faith is, as we all know, very, very basic. We all live by faith, everyone of us. Every waking day we operate on the principles of faith by what we eat, by the way we conduct ourselves, we believe in things. We believe in our house, we believe in our car, we believe in the roads, we believe in the restaurants, we believe in the can goods, we believe in a lot of things. We're losing faith slowly, but basically we believe. We operate on principles of faith. I'll never forget the town in the Midwest in Kansas, the *Reader's Digest*that had been getting their water supply out of a huge storage tank for many, many years and they finally converted over to a pipe system and they drained the storage tank and found all kinds of dead animals and things at the bottom of the tank. And they immediately got retroactive dysentery, you know. We believe in a lot of things, we put our faith in a lot of things. We operate on the basis of faith.

Now everybody does. If you listen to your world carefully, you'll be able to know that. There's a song that says, "I believe in music," that's good. You believe in music. That's not really a secure thing to believe in. Somebody else says, "I believe for every drop of rain that falls a flower grows." Well, that's terrific. I would take you task on that, I think if you count the flowers and count the raindrops, you'll be wrong. "I believe that somewhere in the darkest night a candle glows." Well you're probably right there, probably a lot of candles glowing somewhere. Religious people say, "Well I'm a believer, I believe in religion. O, I believe in religion." Alcoholics Anonymous says, "I believe in a higher power as I understand Him to be." Everybody believes in something. Most people believe in themselves. I heard a guy on the radio on the way to the office this morning and he was preaching away on his sermon and he was talking about believing in yourself, change your life, stop being angry and be happy, stop sinning and do good, stop lusting and love. He kept saying, "Stop lying and tell the truth." He says, "Force yourself." See. He belonged to the World Council of Churches, some kind of a thing, I don't even know what he was trying to say, but whatever it was it was inept, shallow and impossible.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "It is faith in something that makes life worth living." Isn't that vague? Faith in something makes life worth living. What can a man bet his life on? Money? Oh, it doesn't last. Believing in money is pretty bad anyway because the paper doesn't mean a thing.

What do we believe in? What can we believe in? Listen to the words of Studdard(?) Kennedy, a great preacher of some years back. He says this, "I walked in crowded streets where men and

women mad with lust, loose lipped and lewd were promenading down to hell's wide gates. Yet have I looked into another's eyes and seen the light that never was on sea or land, the light of love, pure love and true and on that love I bet my life. I bet my life on beauty, truth and love, not abstract, but incarnate truth, not beauty's passing shadow but itself, its very self-made flesh, love realized. I bet my life on Christ, Christ crucified." And that is precisely it.

What is there to believe in? I'll tell you what there is to believe in, God's unending love. And so we begin with love and then we come to faith because our faith is placed in God's love. You say, "Well how do you know God loves?" Because His love was made visible in Jesus Christ and His love was made doubly visible in the death of Christ on the cross.

You know what I believe in? You know what I bank my life on? I believe that God loves me. Do you know that? And I'm betting my eternal destiny that He does.

You say, "You're gambling." Not really because He proved His love for me by doing what He did on the cross. If the father tells the son he loves the son and then the son in the midst of an emergency is rescued by the father who loses his life in doing it, no one ever has to argue with that boy about whether or not his father loved him. And so, God loves me.

You say, "How do you know that?" I know that because God came into this world in human flesh, went to a cross, was nailed to that cross and bore in His own body my sins and that says to me God loves me because He took my place. I'm betting and banking my eternal destiny on the fact that God loves me. There is something to believe in, I believe in God's love.

Notice verse 27 and see how it unfolds, the end of the verse. "Because you've loved Me and believed that I came out from God," now there's the basis of our faith. The basis of our faith is that Christ came out form God. I would never know that God loved me in the fullest sense unless He showed it to me, and the greatest proof of it is the coming of Christ. So when we're talking about what to believe in, we can believe in God's love only as God reveals it to us. We can't find God. We can't crawl out of our natural world and discover God's love, God has to reveal His love to us. He has to disclose it to us. He has to teach it to us. And so, to begin with, God's love began to be revealed when the Old Testament was written and then was fully realized when Christ came, the end of verse 27, "That I came out from God."

Now the basis of faith, now watch this one, the basis of faith is believing Christ's deity. Now get that one, that is the key to everything and that is the one area of doctrine that everybody's willing to give up today. All this liberalism let's this one go and this is the basis of our entire faith. The basis of everything we believe in is that Christ came from God that He's deity. Listen, if Jesus Christ isn't God, then maybe this stuff that He kept telling about God's love is a lie and if it's a lie, then we're right

back where we started from, we have nothing to believe in and no love at all. And so, we must accept the fact that Jesus Christ came out of God, that He is deity incarnate. This is the carnal doctrine of the gospel. He is not merely a man. He is not Jesus Christ superstar. And to show you how meaningless that statement is, I heard a commercial on the radio the other day, it almost made me want to throw up, something about Gino's Hamburgers, I wouldn't buy a Gino's hamburger for all the money in the world. They've got a little slogan, "Gino's prices superstar," which is supposed to be a little play on words, "Jesus Christ." That's how commercial and crass the terminology of Jesus Christ has become, we've dragged Jesus Christ down to selling 15 cent hamburgers.

You see, this is the kind of thing that happens when you do not uphold the absolute and total deity of Jesus Christ. This is the carnal doctrine of everything that we know and believe in and hope for. If Jesus didn't come out from God, then everything is a lie. And that's exactly why Peter in 2 Peter 2:2 classifies a heretic as one who denies the Lord, you see. That's why Paul is so rattled in Galatians chapter 1 when he talks about those who preach another Christ and pervert Christ. And that's what John meant in his little epistle when he talks about deceivers coming, antichrists. And later on in 2 John he talks about those who come and they present another Christ and we're not even to bid them God's speed. We must commit ourselves to the basic doctrine of the gospel which is that Jesus Christ is none other than God in human flesh.

Now, but there's more to it than that. At the end of verse 27, watch this, "Hath believed that I came out from God," implied in that statement is a lot else. Why did He come out from God? To do a redemptive work. We not only believe that Jesus Christ was God in human flesh, and we never back up on that. He was total God, one hundred percent God all the time that He was here and continues to be and will for all eternity. We also believe that implied in the phrase "came out from God" is the idea that God sent Him forth to do a redemptive work. And so the gospel is not only the deity of the person of Christ, but it is the work of Christ as He comes out from God to accomplish redemption. So, my friends, we believe in something, we just don't believe in love, we just don't believe in music, we don't believe in religion, we don't believe in church, we believe in God revealing Himself in Christ to do a redemptive work in the world. That's what we believe and nothing less than that. And the real commitment of faith comes not only when you just believe that, watch it there in verse 27, but when you love Christ. Do you see that? Believing, the devils believe and tremble, right, James 2? Sure. It's one thing to believe, it's something else to love Christ. That's the commitment end of it, isn't it? I believe it and I love Christ and that secures my faith.

You say, "To believe it and not love Christ, what do you get?" You get nothing. You get nothing. It's so important to believe this. Jesus said in John 8:24, shocking words, He said, "Ye shall die in your sins for if you believe not that I am, you shall die in your sins." I am what? "I am everything I claim to be, I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the resurrection and the life. I am God in human flesh." I am is the name of God, believe that He's deity,

anything less and you make a mockery out of Jesus Christ. But it's not just to believe but to commit in love.

Daniel Polling(?) tells an experience that a man named Channing Pollock who was a playwright related to him. Mr. Pollock was particularly in one evening collaborating with another author. Pollock and he were working on a play. And late one night in Pollock's apartment in New York, they had been working into the wee hours of the morning and something in their conversation caused the friend of Pollock to ask him a question. He said to him, "Have you ever read the New Testament?" Pollock admitted that he hadn't ever read the New Testament and they continued to work and didn't say anything more about it.

After the friend had left in the early hours of the morning, Pollock couldn't sleep because he kept thinking of the question, "Have you ever read the New Testament?" Finally, getting out of bed and searching through his books, he found an old New Testament. He sat down and he read straight through the gospel of Mark, which presents Jesus Christ, of course. And after reading it he walked the streets of Manhattan until dawn.

When he returned to his apartment exhausted, he related to Dan Polling that he said, "I found myself on my knees passionately in love with Jesus Christ. Now, see, that's the commitment of faith. It's all right just to believe, that's the beginning. But to be passionately in love with Jesus Christ is the essence of real saving faith. That's the nitty-gritty.

Now let's continue to look at this in verse 28. He elucidates on His coming forth from the Father and what He meant by this. You see, our faith has content, isn't that great? It's not enough to just believe. It's not enough to just say I believe in believing. It's got to have content. There's got to be something there you believe in. Verse 28, here it comes, "I came forth from the Father and I'm come into the world." Now that's propositional, factual, actual history. He says I came forth from the Father, I was perfect deity. I pre-existed in heaven. I came into the sin-cursed earth. This is basic to saving faith. The propositional, absolute, historical accuracy of God's revelation in Christ, Jesus came from God, He was God in human flesh, we can't let go of that doctrine or everything goes down the drain and we're finished.

Now the Jews didn't believe this, to say nothing of loving Christ. They didn't even believe He came from God. They missed on both counts. You go back to chapter 8 and verse 14 and listen to what happened. "Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Though I bear witness of Myself, yet My witness is true, for I know from where I came and where I go, but ye cannot tell from where I come and where I go.'" You don't know where I came from or where I'm going. You don't know either the end or the beginning. And they were the religious smarties, you know. They were the brains. They were the brain trust of the eastern world. But they didn't know anything about Christ. They didn't know where

He came from or where He went.

You say, "Well that's just Jesus' opinion." Okay, chapter 9 verse 29, "We know...this is the Jews talking here, here's their opinion of themselves...We know that God spoke unto Moses, as for this fellow, we know not from where He is." That's not just Jesus talking, they knew they didn't know. He had healed the blind man and the blind man even knew. He said, "That's real funny, guys, you don't know where He's from and He opened my eyes." See. They didn't know. They admitted they didn't know. They didn't know where He was from and, of course, if they didn't know where He was from, they wouldn't know where He was going.

In John chapter 1, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Verse 10, "He was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not. He came unto His known and His own received Him not." They didn't know who He was. They didn't know where He came from and they didn't know why He came and they didn't know where He was going. They missed the whole redemptive plan of God...the whole thing.

And so, Jesus says I came forth from the Father. Jesus is nothing less than God in human flesh. And He's not just a human being, He's not just a reactionary, a revolutionary or religious freak, He is God in a body. He came into the world. Look at verse 28, "Again I leave the world and go to the Father." Now in that simple little statement you have the entire gospel. That's the clearest most concise statement that Jesus ever uttered in regard to His own origin and destiny. That's the clearest statement Jesus has heretofore said. He has indicated kind of underhandedly to them and kind of mystically that He came from God and would be going back to God, but never in a complete context like this. This is the simplest most concise statement that He ever makes concerning where He came from and where He's going. He came from God to do His perfect work. When it was done, He goes back to God. That's a simple statement. And right there in that verse, verse 28, you have the entire gospel. As a man said, "If you can get that in your head, you've got it in a nutshell."

All right, that will come slow....But, I mean, that's the gospel, that He came out of God, did His perfect work and went back to God. That's the perfect picture of the gospel. Now the earlier statements, as I said, weren't quite so clear. Chapter 16, for example, just showing a couple of them, verse 5, He says, "But now I go My way to Him that sent Me." Now that isn't the whole picture. Again, verse 16 of the same chapter, "A little while and you'll see Me not, and again a little while and you shall see Me because I go to the Father." Remember we saw that statement, that didn't make any sense to them at all. And so it has been somewhat veiled. Even back in chapter 14, wasn't it verse 28? He says, "Ye have heard how I said unto you I go away and come again. If you love Me you will rejoice because I said I go unto the Father for My Father is greater than I," that is also a very confusing statement to them. And so this is the clearest, most simple statement and in it you have the essence of Christ's perfect work and also of His person from God and back to God.

Now those are simple and powerful words. It's kind of a beautiful thing to realize that there's a kind of a freedom in verse 28, there's no...there's no strings on Jesus. You know, He's not a puppet. He says, "I came out from the Father and I go back." He's not...there aren't any hostile powers forcing Jesus to leave. He's not running in fear from persecution. It's not that the Father calls Him home. He has come and He has done what He came to do and when the work is finished, He now goes back. By His own will and act He accepted the mission of God, by His own will and act He completed the mission of God, by His own will and act He returns to the place where He came from. They're simple words but they are infinite words in their scope for they encompass the entire plan of redemption. That's the gospel, a real God who exists, a real God who loves men, who to redeem men must become man and enter into their world, accomplish a redemptive work, turn around and go back to energize them to live the redemptive life that He's provided for them. Now that's a love story that's true. That's a love story that wasn't written by a fiction author. That's a love story that's absolutely true.

Now the disciples' response to this is beautiful. Verse 29, this is simple enough and they're finally beginning to get it. Verse 29, "His disciples said unto Him, 'Lo, now speakest Thou plainly and speakest no proverb," now You're talking, Lord, it's coming through. And it was so simple, see. And the funny part of it is that they think that the fulfillment of verse 25, "the time is coming when I won't speak in proverbs," is right then, which proves they don't really understand all of it. They understood this statement, at the total fulfillment of these words of Jesus in verse 25 and 26 wouldn't be till Pentecost, some 50 days later, but nevertheless here they understand. "Lo, now speakest Thou plainly and speakest no *paroimia*, this isn't so veiled, Lord." I mean, we get this.

And I imagine they were kind of, you know, feeling good. That's pretty simple, I came from God, did My work and go back to God, not too easy to misunderstand that. It was simple. And it's kind of a beautiful thing to see the simplicity of their faith. They can see in this that God loves them. They can see that God sent Christ to do the work of redeeming them and then when He's done He goes back to God. They can see this. The plan is clear. Jesus came, loved them, opened up the way to God and once the way was open, gave them entrance into God's presence and then went back to God. That's the plan. And they're blessed with a fresh kind of understanding. They feel like they see it all, though really they don't. Calvin says regarding this passage, he says, "It is certain that the disciples did not understand fully the meaning of Christ's discourse, but though they were not yet capable of this, the mere odor of it refreshed them." They were just getting a few sniffs of what it was to understand and it really smelled good. They really liked it. They wouldn't get it all, of course, unto the Holy Spirit came. But they understood this much, and this is great progress, I mean at least they've stepped outside their sorrow for a minute, haven't they? At least they've gotten off their own little problems, long enough to be able to at least be a little bit excited about what they're learning, instead of just moping around in sorrow over the leaving of Jesus. They believed all that they understood.

Now let me give you a little point here, this is a very important principle. All God ever asks out of a man is that he believe what he understands. All throughout the Old Testament revelation...people say, "Well how were you saved in the Old Testament?" Well how were they saved in Genesis? Or how were they saved during the times of the kings? Or how were they saved later on etc., etc.?

Men were saved by believing the revelation of God at whatever point it had been disclosed. God doesn't expect you to believe in the whole New Testament if you were born during the time of Genesis. God expected you to believe what He had revealed. And Jesus Christ accepts them where they are in believing what He has revealed to them. They don't have to know all the answers, they have to believe what He has told them. In other words, true saving faith, watch it, is a commitment to every single thing God has revealed. That's what it is...to everything that God has revealed. And so they believed. They don't understand everything. They think they understand more than they really do, but they at least believe what they do understand. They've advanced in knowledge. The upper room discourses haven't been in vain. The experience of this night of nights has left its mark on them. They are beginning now to see who Jesus is.

Now notice verse 30, and here they kind of get a little too hepped up with what they know. "Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things and needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." That's a great statement, the only problem is a few hours after this when Jesus gets captured, they're going to run away like a bunch of fearful sheep. But at this point, they're really hanging in there. "Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things." A little while later they're not too sure, but here they're sure.

This is how life goes, isn't it? As a Christian do you ever have those moments of doubt? Well sure you do. There's moments when you, "Ohhh, I don't if God...I wonder if this whole thing is really for real?" There are moments when you begin to mistrust God and yet there's other times when you believe and you're sure that He is who He claimed to be. Sure, we all have that. The disciples were no different. Perhaps even a more infantile faith than yours and thus more susceptible to this problem. But in verse 30 they were sure that He knew all things and needeth not that any man should ask Thee. They probably realized how much He knew because a little while later...a little while earlier, I should say, back in verses 17 and following, He had answered their questions before they had asked them. And they had had illustrations of this all the way along.

What convinced them then evidently was the fact that He knew everything. And all right, they say we believe You came out of God, You came forth from God. This is a statement of their belief in His deity. They believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. Do you think that they loved Him? Do you? Sure they did. If they believed in His deity and loved Him, that was sufficient for saving faith. You say, "Is this the occasion of the conversion of the disciples?" I don't know. I don't really know if we can

pinpoint when they were actually saved. I think they believed all the way along to a degree, but here we see at least everything coming to focus. They had believed in His divine origin, they believed in His deity, and they had shown again and again how much they loved him. And that's what it means to be saved. That's the essence of salvation, to believe and to love Him. And so they make the classic confession, "By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." They can see the glory of His deity shining again through the veil of His humanity. They are convinced...they're convinced that He came from God. And right here the light is shining in the disciples' hearts as brightly as it has ever shined there in the three years they've been with Him. We ought to kind of mark a little circle around verse 30 in our Bibles because that's the apex of the experience of the disciples in their relationship to Jesus Christ to this point. Now after the resurrection it gets more exciting, but for the time prior to the cross, this is the time when they hit the highest peak in believing.

But the light is about to go out and be obscured. This great confession will linger in their hearts kind of hidden. Oh, I think down deep they believed, but they really fought it, they really fought it through the times of the trial of Jesus Christ and into the death of Christ but I think it was still there and when Jesus came out of the grave, the flame was fanned again and the light shone more brightly than it had ever shone. And so they give evidence of their childlike baby faith. It's kind of like Mark 9:24, you know, where the man says, "Lord, I believe, help my...what?...my unbelief." With their doubts and their fears and their questions and their misgivings, Jesus accepted them where they were. And that's how He accepts you. So many people say, "I'd like to receive Jesus Christ, I'd like to come into this relationship, but I have questions, I have doubts, I have fears, I don't know how much I believe..." This is where He accepts you, at the point of your infant faith. Wherever you are, this is where He'll meet you as He did them.

Now I want to just review one thought. Keep in mind that their faith had content. They believed that He came out from God to do a work and go back to God. Believing is a matter of putting your faith in something and someone, not in nothing. Faith must have content.

But now watch how Jesus warns them in verse 31. And I don't think this is a question. There are no punctuation marks or question marks in the Greek New Testament. Let's translate it this way. "Jesus answered them, 'Now you believe.'" Jesus answered them, "Now you believe," emphasizing the word now. Okay, guys, right, now you believe. This is great, I'll take you where you are now. For the moment your faith is good. And, you know, it must have been a sweet moment for Jesus. I mean, He's been working for this for a long time. Personally down in my heart I feel that this may be the climax of the real salvation of the disciples because Jesus for the first time says to them, "Now you believe." And yet we have to be careful of that because we can't really build a case on it. It's possible that it could be a question although I feel it's best to take it as a statement. Now you believe. And this is sweet for Jesus because after all that He said and struggled through for these chapters that we've been studying to try to get the message across, they finally believe and through

the gloom of the bitter rejection, the sunlight of faith begins to break and smiles come across their faces and across His where there was only sorrow. And for Jesus, this is enough. They believe, they believe. Three years of miracles and loving them and teaching them and this whole long night of anguish in His own torn heart as He approaches the cross and as He's given Himself to them in word and in action of love, constantly doing these things that we've seen and finally it breaks and they say, "We believe...we believe." And for Jesus, it is enough.

It isn't full-grown faith, it's just baby faith, but it's faith and they believe. And the light will get pretty small and the flicker will be pretty low during the time of the cross but there will be enough left when He comes out of the grave to fan it again and they're going to set the world on fire. At least the candle's been lit and it's enough for Jesus. And I said earlier, that's all he asks, you see. He doesn't ask that you come to Him with total comprehension. He only asks that you come with a baby faith and you say, "I believe, help my unbelief." And so He says, "You believe now, but I'll tell you something, men, there's going to come a time of testing." They thought they were rocks, you know, but they were pebbles.

Peter back in chapter 13 verse 36 was saying, "Lord, if You're going to die, I'll die with You." I'm sure he had his chance, and did he die? No, rather than die he denied Jesus Christ. They over-estimated themselves. They failed to see the infancy and the weakness of their flesh. They failed to see the power of Satan. They failed to see that their faith was baby faith. And like young recruits, you know, they had the uniform on and they knew the drill instructions but they didn't know what to do when they got in the battle, see.

Mark it, young Christian, here's a good one, the secret of spiritual strength is self-distrust and deep humility. The secret of spiritual strength is self-distrust, don't trust yourself. Paul said, "When I am weak, then I am strong." In other words, when I rightly evaluate my weaknesses then I'm strong. It's a great principle.

All right now, look at verse 32. And Jesus describes for them their hour. "Behold the hour cometh, yea and is now come, that ye shall be scattered...Matthew 26:31 and 56, from Zachariah 13:7 predicted this...you shall be scattered, smite the shepherd and the sheep are scattered, every man to his own, likely to his own home, and shall leave Me alone." That's a sad thing. What about your faith now, guys? Was their faith a sham? Is it not...was it not true saving faith? Well, it was shaken at the root and they fled, they took off. But I love the fact that there was enough of that faith left for a resurrected Christ to stir up fresh branches which bore fruit. And I like this because it's honest. Don't you like the fact that the Bible makes out of the greatest men, the disciples, real people, not super-spiritual pious heroes? These guys were just like you and me, just real people. They had their faith problems, man, their faith went down the tubes and they were just hanging on by a thread. And after the resurrection, Jesus Christ fanned it again and they set the world on fire.

Listen, these times come to all of us. You say, "What about when I lose my faith? I mean, what about when I just...I really don't believe God and I can't trust Him for things, you know, and I want to pray for somebody but I don't actually believe He'll heal him? Or I don't even know if I'm secure anymore, I don't even know if He's even working in my life. What happens when my faith just goes down the drain and I...is that it, I mean, do I lose my salvation? Is it all over with?"

Let me read you a verse and mark it down, if not in your book, somewhere in your mind. Second Timothy 2:15, listen to this...pardon me, 2 Timothy 2:13, "If we believe not..." now did you get that? Lose our faith. Listen, "Yet He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself." Did you hear that? If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself. In other words, if He has chosen you, if He dwells within you, if His Spirit is in you, even though you lose your faith He will never deny you, He will never do anything but remain absolutely and eternally faithful to you and He'll fan that small diminishing flame back to life again.

But at the end of verse 32 He says, and I love this, "Ye shall leave Me alone, and yet I am not alone because the Father is with Me." Isn't that good? The ever-present Father. It's a sad word here because this is the first time that Jesus reflects on His own anguish, the first time since chapter 13 all the way through, this is the first time He really reflects on His own pain. You'll all leave Me, He says. Thinking of His own loneliness. Then He says, "Well but the Father will be there." But you know something? Even the Father left Him for a time. He cried on the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" when He was bearing sin.

These are wonderful insights into the blessed Jesus. And they show the depth of the faith of the disciples. There is something to believe in, my friend, even with simple little baby faith, to believe that Jesus is God in human flesh, to believe that He came to do a redemptive work, die on a cross in your place, to believe that He'll return to the Father. To believe that with doubts and misgivings and questions is all Jesus asks. If you believe Him, He'll take you at the point of your faith and He'll strengthen your faith. And faith...during the times of your life, sin may come in and temptation, your faith may begin to wane and it may begin to fall, but that doesn't mean He stops being faithful. He'll move down and He'll fan that flame of faith again and it will rise again. Faith is believing in Jesus in all that He claimed to be. There is something to believe in, believe in God's love and believe in it because it was revealed in Jesus Christ. And I'll tell you something, bet your life on it.

There's a third thing and that's hope, verse 33. This is the ultimate end of love and faith. "These things I have spoken unto you that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Is that hope? Fantastic hope. The world may persecute you and kill you, chapter 15. The world may think they're doing service to God

by putting you to death. The world is hopeless, war, pollution, disaster...are there any escapes from the plagues of man? Yes there are. Jesus says, "Don't worry about it, I have overcome the world." When you know and love Jesus Christ, my friends, there's hope. There's hope. This world holds no fear for me. People talk about the terrible disasters that are coming, I don't believe that I'll ever experience those things. I believe Jesus Christ cares for His own and I believe that long before all of that breaks loose, Jesus is going to take His people out of this world. I have no fear because my hope is in Him, His resurrection hope.

Listen, the world gave its best shot. Satan gave his best shot at Jesus on the cross. And you know what? Jesus took every one of Satan's shots, went into the grave and came out the other side the victor. He defeated Satan and He conquered death and He destroyed the power of death and He destroyed the devil. And He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And I believe that and put my hope in that. Like a mountain climber and a guide, the guide climbs to a high flat area, the rope is below and safely pulling up the climber saying, "Don't be afraid, I've made it, we're secure." Jesus Christ has already conquered the world. He sits on the pinnacle of conquering and just draws us to Himself. Jesus won the victory and it's your victory and mine.

With Paul, we know that death has no sting. The grave has no victory. We know in Romans 8:37 that we are more than conquerors, nothing can ever separate us from God's love. This is our hope. And we believe that some day we're going to leave this world to be with Jesus Christ and we fear not what the world may bring because He has overcome the world. And in 1 John 5 it says, "Who is he that overcometh the world? Even those who believe in Jesus Christ." If you believe in Christ and you love Him, you're an overcomer just like Jesus is, 1 John 5:4 and 5. You're an overcomer just like He is.

There they are, three things: faith, hope and love. And when you know those three, what is the result? Peace, verse 33, "These things, all these things I have spoken unto you that in Me you might have...what?..peace." When you learn all these lessons, the result is peace. Chapter 15 verse 11, "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you that your joy might be full." The result of peace again is joy. Even in a world like this, you cay you can have peace? That's right, even in a world like this you can have joy, that's right. Why? Because somebody loves me and I love somebody and that somebody is God because I have somebody and something to believe in and that is God's love and my eternal salvation, and not only that, I hope and my hope is steadfast and sound and secure, I hope for an eternal life in the presence of the God I love. Because of that I have perfect peace and perfect joy, and it can be yours through Jesus Christ.

Father, we thank You for our time together. We rejoice in what You've taught us. We're made aware again of the simplicity of the gospel. We haven't said anything perhaps new to many of us, but, Father, we've covered some wonderful truths. God, this is our message, this is our hope, our faith, our love and it all involves Jesus Christ who expresses love to us as the one in whom we believe, and

who even is our hope. Father, I pray that no one will leave this place who has not received these wonderful gifts by believing and loving Jesus Christ and that we as Christians might have grateful hearts for what we have. We thank You for what we really can do in the strength and energy imparted to us by peace and joy as we go into the world to proclaim this message. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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