

John 14:25-27

25 "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

The Gospel of John blends history, interpretation, biography, and theology, into the Christian experience. This Scripture takes place during the Last Supper. It is a time when Jesus is giving his farewell discourse to his disciples. He has announced that he is being betrayed, that he and God are being glorified, and that he will be with them only a little longer. This is also the time when Jesus gives us a powerful new commandment to love one another. Jesus tells Peter of his denial and tells the disciples that he is going to prepare a place in God's house. The way to God is through Jesus and those who love Jesus will keep the word of God.

Earlier this year I took a specialized class called Clinical Pastoral Education. This training has proven to be very helpful in ministry. It is a different level of education that is intensive training and study, with on hands experience that is accompanied with professional coaching. The climax of our training came at the end when we had a celebration, a dinner, recognition of graduates, and farewell speeches. I also had a one on one meeting with my instructor as he evaluated my progress and talked about some things that I can work on for self improvement. This was his last lesson and the last chance that he had to emphasize the things that are the most important.

The Scripture takes place during a very special time. After what was probably about three and a half years of intensive training, they had a type of finally; a climax of their training and education. The farewell discourse is not only a goodbye message from Jesus, but he also gives some splendid news. The Holy Spirit will be with you to continue the work of Jesus. So, this is not the end. The lesson is tremendous good news. The spoken word of Jesus is coming to an end. This is the last lesson, the last chance that Jesus has to emphasize the things that are the most important. Jesus begins the meal with a solemn announcement that he has greatly desired to eat the Passover meal with them before he is to suffer. He informs them that he is going to leave them, and that he and God are going to be glorified. Jesus bestows blessing on the disciples "my peace I give to you ... do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." In the most extreme time of trouble we get peace from the Lord. The legacy of Jesus is peace, he does not just counsel about peace, he gives peace.

While facing the certainty of death, Jesus dwells in peace, and gives peace to his followers with no regrets or misgivings. The words of farewell come with a promise. Jesus is going to heaven where there will be rejoicing in the homecoming. The death of Jesus is not defeat, he offers himself to the forces of evil which is overcome with the greater power of love. It is from this stronger power of love that Jesus offers himself. Jesus gives himself to us because of his love for us and because of the love of God for us. The reality is that Jesus conquers death with God's gift of love. Therefore, evil is conquered by love.

Today when we face the death of a loved one, we are comforted in knowing that Jesus sacrificed and died to bring us salvation. Death is a rite of passage to eternal glory; it is a gateway to eternity in heaven. We get peace from the Lord. When Jesus conquered death through a tremendous act of love, we get peace from the Lord.

Jesus announced that he was going to suffer but beyond that is joy in the future of God's kingdom. What is the end for the world is not really the end. The missionary work of Jesus carries forward through the world to reach the entire world and forward through the ages to reach to us and we get this wonderful peace from the Lord.