

FAITH BEYOND GOODBYE

(Jesus said) "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. ... I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you." John 15:26-27, 16:4b-7.

How rough a time this must have been for Jesus' disciples? They had spent three years getting to know their beloved Rabbi and confidant. But time was running out for Jesus, and they knew it. His words to them, profound and consoling as they were, had to be devastating to hear through the fog of their emotion. Jesus is telling them He will soon be leaving to return to the Heavenly Father; it's safe to say it's the last thing they wanted to hear.

"But now I am going to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart." When Jesus said this, His disciples' hearts were heavy. They were already grieving over what they knew was going to take place—how they were going to lose their best Friend. "Who is this Helper You will send, Jesus?" they wondered. "It's You we want; it's You we trust. Why do You have to leave?" Questions like these, and more, must have raced through their minds.

But Jesus' mission wasn't only to love and care for His disciples and those who believed in Him two-thousand years ago. His mission was for you and me, **today**, and for those who come after us. The very thing His disciples so feared—His death and departure—would signal God's supreme act of love, mercy, and the forgiveness of sins. This took place on Jesus' cross and was confirmed with His resurrection from the dead. Jesus was saying to His disciples that the coming Helper, the Holy Spirit, would be there to comfort and reassure them that these things are true.

This is what He says to you and me, too. When we're down and out and feeling alone, when we long for comfort and our faith's reassurance, God is here with us—just as He promised. Certainly, Jesus knows that our hearts are heavy at times. He also knows there is precious little peace in this world. And this isn't difficult for us to see at all! However, He wants us to remember what we so soon forget—that He reigns victorious, and because He does, in faith, so do we. "I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

So, family, let's continue in Jesus' victorious reign, basking in the gift of true peace over these few summer months. The world may be in chaos and tribulation, but our Living Lord has overcome the world--which means so will we!

Always in Christ,
Pastor Seehafer