

John 16:25-33

Virtues Given By God

In this closing of John chapter 16 we find no new information. This is Jesus' final discourse with His disciples and is given in the nature of a summary. Just because there is no new information does not mean these themes found in verses 25 to 33 are not important, but in truth are repeated because they are of the greatest importance. As 1 Corinthians teaches, **“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”** (1 Corinthians 13:13) Faith, hope and love are central to our Christian faith and they are found here in John. But there is a prerequisite; that is, one must believe. Those who call themselves Christian, but believe not as God has revealed Himself, know only a shadow of true faith, hope and love.

Why is belief so necessary and vital to these core Christian virtues? There is a set of verses that explains simply and quickly what it means to repent and become a Christian. These verses are commonly called the “Roman Road to Salvation.” The verses I now read out of Romans chapter ten are part of that set of verses and tell that we must believe. **“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”** (Romans 10:8-10) With the heart or soul one must believe, for out of the heart flows who we truly are.

Listen as I take us through a progression of Christian belief. One's foundation

must believe God is the God of Truth as the Prophet Samuel declared, “O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true.” (1 Samuel 7:28) We must believe God is unable to lie. As the Apostle Paul said as he preached the gospel “for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.” (Titus 1:1-2) This then means, just as God is eternal and gives believers knowledge of eternal truth, His truth is always true. Naturally it would follow that God’s truth; the Word of God, the Bible, is eternally true. The writer of Psalm 119 wrote this clearly of God, “Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true.” (Psalm 119:142) God’s Word then must be true not for just moral and spiritual issues, but for all things it addresses, including science and history. Then we must believe that God who created the universe and manages human history to fulfill His plan does so for His purposes. As the Prophet Isaiah spoke, “It is God who declares the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.’” (Isaiah 46:10) The Word of God, His revelation to mankind, we call the Bible, reveals His perfection and carries His authority and the truth it reveals is absolute. I know the Bible to be truth – I have challenged it and tested it, and it has withstood not only my tests but also the tests of men throughout history – it has withstood the test of time. The question is - do you know God and His Word to be truth? If you believe what I have just taught is the truth of God then I ask you to stand and affirm your faith in Christ Jesus by the grace of God which gives us eternal hope and love and His truth through the Bible. Please stand. Thank you. Now please be seated.

My beloved, you understand what you have just declared means you are the

“called ones” of God and He has set you apart from this fallen world and you are “Holy”! In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, “Holy” means set apart for God by God. The word is קִדְּשׁ “*qadash*” (**kaw·dash**) and it means to sanctify and be hallowed by God. In the New Testament Greek it is ἅγιος “*hagios*” (hag-e-ose) and it means to be dedicated or consecrated to the service of God. To be holy one must believe. To live the Christian virtues of Love, Faith and Hope one must believe.

God placed into all people a desire for purpose and meaning of who they are and why they are. But, without Christ they try to answer these questions from the world and the world’s answers are short-term, bleak, shallow and prove in the end to be lacking. Solomon expressed this so well in chapter two of Ecclesiastes, I encourage you to read chapter two this coming week. One verse from chapter two says, “[Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.](#)” (Ecclesiastes 2:11) Genuine hope and understanding of purpose only can be understood and experienced through believing “[in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I \(you\) have been entrusted.](#)” (1 Timothy 1:11)

As Jesus spoke to comfort the disciples on this last night He assured them of God the Father’s love for them and He bolstered their wilting faith. Jesus assured them of both God the Father and His own, as God the Son, victory over the evil of the fallen world and they too should have hope for their victory is based on God’s. Through Christ they could experience love, faith and hope during their lives, even in times of trial. Now I want to explore each of these; love, faith and hope found

within John 16 verses 25 to 33.

Love

We find this first virtue of love in verses 25 to 27 listen for God's love as I read, "I (Jesus) have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. **26** In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; **27** for **the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.**" Jesus is teaching a transition here from lack of understanding to a deep knowledge based on the Father's love for believers because true believers love and are obedient to Jesus.

There are numerous examples during the three years the disciples were with Jesus and being taught by Him that they simply did not understand. One the many examples comes from the Gospel According to Matthew, "And he (Jesus) called the people to him and said to them, 'Hear and understand: **11** it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.' **12** Then the disciples came and said to him (Jesus), 'Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' **13** He (Jesus) answered, 'Every plant that my heavenly Father has **not** planted will be rooted up. **14** Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.' **15** But Peter said to him (Jesus), 'Explain the parable to us.' **16** And he (Jesus) said, 'Are you also still without understanding? **17** Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? **18** But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart,

and this defiles a person.’” (Matthew 15:10-18) There are also numerous examples of Jesus rebuking the disciples for their lack of understanding. But we see that some of these times their lack of understanding was due to Jesus speaking as verse 25 says, “figures of speech” meaning Jesus spoke in vague, cryptic ways with several possible meanings. Jesus’ teaching, at times, did not make the meaning clear and the meaning was not readily apparent, and would have to be studied and searched in order to find the true meaning. I am so glad that I am not the only that struggles with the meaning of some scripture – the disciples make me feel better. But, let me ask you, when you have struggled with what the Lord is teaching in the scriptures, through prayer, study and meditation, and then you come to understand – isn’t that a great moment? Was it not worth the effort? Here is the difference; God’s veils the true meaning of the scriptures to unbelievers. They do not understand because they are spiritually blind, which is the result of their unbelief and insurrection against God. Remember what Jesus said about the unbelieving Pharisees in Matthew 15 we just looked at, in verse 14 Jesus says, “they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” Only the Holy Spirit can remove the scales from their blind eyes, bringing spiritual life and enabling a person to see and understand the truth of the scriptures. The blind “will fall into the pit.”

On the other hand you, as a “called out” one who is holy and set apart from the world for service to God; you have a great responsibility. As Jesus explained and as recorded in Luke, “that servant who knew his master’s will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. **48** But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him

to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.” (Luke 12:47-48) As believers you have every resource available from God to accomplish what He calls you to do. God does not want your excuses for being disobedient. You are bought and paid for by the work of Christ on the Cross. You are to have the faith of the centurion and the obedience of his slave. The story is recorded in Matthew 10, “Jesus said to him (*the centurion*), ‘I will come and heal him.’ (*Speaking of the centurion’s servant*) 8 But the centurion said, ‘Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does *it*.’ 10 Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.” (Matthew 10:7-10) Should not our faith be even stronger than the centurion’s? We have been given the scriptures, history showing the scriptures are true, the testimony of millions of witness for Christ throughout history, the change that God has done within us and the precious gift of God – the Holy spirit living within us. We have no excuse – we must be obedient to God. We are to fulfill His calling in our lives and to obediently live the scriptures. God the Son may have spoken in “figures of speech” to the disciples in verse 25, but for you Jesus speaks to “you plainly about the Father.” Then just as Jesus told the disciples in verse 27 they will shortly become aware that “the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.” My beloved, these things I am speaking of and is written in the scriptures you must know and believe.

One may say, “I pray, but I do not believe God hears.” Or, “why does God not

answer my prayers?” Have you had the courage to ask yourself, “Do I believe to the very depths of my soul?” Do you understand what Jesus said in verse 26? “In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf.” This is echoing John 14:13 and 14, “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” To pray and ask in the name of Jesus Christ means to ask for the will of God, which means to seek God on His terms not ours. Here in chapter 16 Jesus is clarifying that one does not have to ask through Jesus because God the Father is indifferent to our prayers. Rather, we have the privilege to seek God in prayer directly, both praying through God the Father and Jesus the Christ, God the Son. We have this privilege because as verse 27 explains, “the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.” Here we see God knows His children’s love in two ways; one, He knows the very heart and mind of a person and secondly, by our obedience to Him and His Word. Why do we so desperately try holding on to some of this world? We need to let go and draw near to Jesus. As the writer of Hebrews said, **14 “Therefore, since we (believers) have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”** (Hebrews 4:14-16) As Peter wrote, we as believers are members of God’s priesthood and there is no need for us to go through intermediaries – we have a direct line to God and yet, this does not eliminate the need for Christ’s intercession on our behalf for He is

the Great High Priest.

In verse 27 we read, “for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.” Here we find in the Greek the word is φιλέω *phileō* that is translated as “love.” This is a deep love of affection; it is the love parents have for their children and children for their parents (except maybe in the teenage years). God has a fatherly affection for His children and loved His children so much He sent His only begotten Son to die as the sacrifice for their sins. Another verse that speaks to us of God’s loving sacrifice for His children is found again in the Book of Romans and is part of, the Roman Road to Salvation, “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) God is love and as His children He wants you to know His love and love Him in return. By this, He will strengthen your faith.

Faith

The next Christian virtue is found in verses 27 to 32 of John 16, please read along with me, “you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. **28** I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

29 “His disciples said, ‘Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! **30** Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.’ **31** Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe? **32** Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.’”

I find people interesting, they are skeptics concerning absolute truth of God and His Bible even though mathematically the odds are in favor of God by 1 to 1 Trillion to the 10th power. Yet, they trust the food they eat, the water they drink. They trust the driver in the on-coming lane to stay in his lane. They board planes and believe they will stay in the air. People will put their faith in love, even though the divorce rate in American shows that statistically this is not a good bet. They will put their faith in money – when I was young I tried that and know, even though I made a lot of money that was not the place to put my faith and trust. History demonstrates that to put our faith in our society or a country or ourselves is perilous.

On the other hand the faith of believers of the Christian Triune God is proven solid by history, science, by the life Jesus Christ and by the validity of the scriptures. In verse 28 Jesus expresses the central doctrine of the Christian faith by saying, “I came from the Father and have come into the world.” This short statement affirms Jesus’ deity and that apart from believing in Jesus no one is saved. Jesus was concise when He said, “I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he (*the Christ*) you will die in your sins.” (John 8:24) To reject Jesus Christ of the Bible or believe in any other Christ or false gospel means to be satanically deceived and be “led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ,” as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:3. The Sadducees, Pharisees and everyone since the resurrection of Jesus have placed themselves under the judgment of God. God the Father and God the Son paid the ultimate price that people could be saved and reconciled back to God. To reject such an offer is folly. Today there are many that have convinced themselves that by following a system of works or a set of man-made scriptures to their liking or to

follow the traditions of their ancestors will somehow gain them favor with God. God has only one way, His way, for people to be redeemed. Again Jesus was clear, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) People may freely decide to place their faith in anything they choose; their own ability, money, political system, and the company they own or work for. I choose to stand with the Prophet Joshua and will say to anyone who will listen, “if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods (every generation has idols it chooses to worship instead of God) your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15) We all will reap the fruit of our choices – for anyone listening that does not fear the God who created all, I say to you, I have challenged God and praise Him for losing my petty self to the God of eternity. I pray you will turn from your disbelief and be saved. I have hope beyond this life – where lies your hope?

Hope

Our last Christian virtue we will explore through our passage in John 16 is found in its last verse. Reading verse 33, Jesus says, “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.” Coming spiritually alive to understand God’s amazing love and placing one’s faith in the atoning work of Jesus the Christ brings a peace amid a hostile world. The world only brings tribulations, pain and disappointment. Again Jesus speaks clearly and to the point, saying, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do

not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (John 14:27) Have you experienced this peace that Jesus brings into believers lives? Isn't incredible! This adds to the hope I already have because of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I have hope because of the change I have experienced as I have growth in the Word of God. This gives me hope when the world says there is no hope. Look at the supernatural courage and insight of Stephen – he died well. Look at the supernatural courage of millions martyred for Christ over the last two thousand years. Does this not testify to the hope that is available for all believers? Where do you think this supernatural power comes from? It is from the Holy Spirit that lives in every true believer. I can testify that without the Holy Spirit I am positive I would be a coward trying to save myself at the expense of everything and everybody else. Before Christ, I lived among the “walking spiritually dead” and today I am alive, physically and more importantly spiritually alive because of my Lord and Savior Jesus. I can testify from experience - you may not think you will not have the courage to stand firm for Christ in all circumstances, but the Holy Spirit will be there with you and give you the courage.

I think it is poignant that Jesus' last words to the disciples before they departed for Gethsemane were words of love, faith and hope. Jesus reminded them and us that these fundamental truths and virtues are the marks of Christians and our ministries. These are the marks of the saints that have gone before us and those that will follow us. As Jesus ended his teaching we only have to move ahead one verse to chapter 17, there we see Him move to prayer. I have ended the teaching for this morning and now I want us to turn to prayer. Gather in groups of 2 to 4 or 5 and let's spend time praying to our amazing God and for each of us to grow in our love, faith and hope. I will call you when it is time to finish.