

Sermon or Lesson: How Jesus Interacted With His Disciples, Part 7 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Teaching In Which Its Understanding May Not Be Gained Until Later

PASSAGE: John 15:26-16:4, 33, 12-14

KEY VERSE: John 16:4

INTRO: Have you ever watched a suspenseful movie in which information given in the beginning of the movie does not make any sense to the storyline until the very end when the movie's main characters encounter a situation in which that prior information now applies? And throughout the middle of the movie, you are earnestly trying to figure out or theorize how that beginning information fits in? Meanwhile, your spouse or sibling, who has seen the movie before, is calmly sitting there munching on fresh buttery popcorn and guzzling ice-cold soda, totally relaxed, and keeps telling you to just wait, it will make sense in the end.

Let's study some passages to see how Jesus used this delayed-understanding technique in the teaching of His disciples.

READ: John 15:18-25 to get some context for the passage to be studied

READ: John 15:26-16:4, 33

[Lesson Questions:

- - Within the context of these verses, what is Jesus teaching His disciples about?
- - In teaching on this topic of future persecution, what are two main expectations that Jesus cites for the disciples as they experience persecution in the future?
- - What help does Jesus offer the disciples for them to successfully endure the persecution in the future?]

SECTION POINT: Within the topic in these verses of future persecution, Jesus is teaching the disciples in advance so that later when they encounter this persecution, they will then remember His teaching, understand it then, and apply it successfully then.

- - Jesus was teaching the disciples to prepare them for the upcoming persecution that both He and they will encounter in the future. (vv.16:1,33)
- - They are to testify about Jesus in the midst of persecution. (v.15:27)
- - They are not to "go astray" in the midst of persecution. (v.16:1)
"go astray" = Strong's #4624 "to entrap, i.e. trip up (figuratively, stumble [transitively] or entice to sin, apostasy or displeasure)"; i.e. to be offending to God's plan for them.
- - Jesus is giving the disciples advance warning. (v.16:4)
- - And He is extending peace and encouragement to them through this teaching. (v.16:33)
- - Jesus additionally discloses that He will send the Holy Spirit to assist them, which they likely did not understand what that meant or would entail. (v.15:26)

- - The disclosure of this information at this time was designed to be helpful for the disciples in the future even though they may not have grasped its meaning in the present. (vv.16:1,4)
- - They are to remember this teaching when they encounter this predicted persecution in the future. (v.16:4)
- - Upon remembering this teaching in the future, when they are **in** the forewarned persecution situations they will at that time work out its meaning and acquire understanding of what Jesus was talking about. (v.16:4)
- - At that time in the future, this information they are being taught in the present will help them not go astray or quit, but instead equip them to adjust and be successful in enduring that persecution in the future. (v.16:1)

[Lesson Question: What does this passage possibly suggest about why Jesus previously exposed His disciples to terror, strenuous exhausting prolonged labor, and great danger of death on the lake?]

SECTION POINT: The information in this passage supports a contention that **Jesus previously exposed His disciples to terror, strenuous exhausting prolonged labor, and repeated great danger of death on the lake in order to prepare them for the extremely hazardous and life-threatening dangers they will encounter within future persecution because of their affiliation to Jesus.**

- - During their dangerous lake experiences, Jesus was building their faith in Him to save them in life-threatening situations, as He stated during each of those events.
- - The effect of going through those dangerous lake experiences would have desensitized, toughened up, and prepared the disciples for the traumatic persecution (“kills you” v.16:2) they will be encountering in the future after Jesus leaves. (vv.16:4-5)

READ: John 16:12-14

[Lesson Questions:

- - What, then, are Jesus’ expectations for the disciples on how they should respond in regard to teaching that is not understood in the present in relation to the future?
- - In what ways will the Holy Spirit help the disciples in the future?
- - What does this passage say about God’s intention for timing of understanding?
- - And what does this imply for us believers today?]

SECTION POINT: Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to “guide” the disciples “into all truth” (v.13) **at that time** when they are better able to “receive” it and process it and retain or “carry” it. (v.12; from “bear” - Strong’s #0941)

“guide” = Strong’s #3594 “to show the way (literally or figuratively [teach])”

- - Jesus has much more information to teach the disciples, but it is overwhelming or more than they can now bear. (v.16:12)
- - Evidently, the disciples did not grasp, comprehend, or fully understand what Jesus is telling them now, but at some time in the future, probably when they are in a persecuting situation like that which Jesus is here predicting, the Holy Spirit will guide

them into understanding or “making known” (v.16:14) what they remember Jesus had previously taught them (v.16:4).

- - Jesus intends that in future situations the disciples would remember His prior teaching (v.16:4), and with the help and "counsel" (v.15:26) of the Holy Spirit see the applicability of the prior not-understood teaching to their present circumstances, gain understanding, and respond righteously without going astray or wavering (v.16:1).

- - God’s purpose is for the Holy Spirit to work in balanced conjunction with Jesus’ teaching (as recorded in Scriptures) to guide believers into understanding and truth about that prior teaching - i.e. to facilitate enlightenment.

- - By extension, this enlightening can be delayed to occur over unspecified time, which may vary in range from the immediate to perhaps a long time thereafter, may vary in progression, and may coincide with circumstances being encountered or experienced by the believer or by someone the believer is ministering to.

- - From experiential testimonies of believers in our time, God does use this same technique in believers’ lives today, i.e. He plants the Word in our hearts to be later understood (sprout) and applied (grow) in encountered situations in life.

BIG IDEA: At His choosing, God may facilitate the teaching of biblical principles in which adequate understanding of those principles is not gained until later, when a relating situation is encountered and the previous teaching is remembered.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Is enlightenment of the meaning of Scriptures being achieved in your spiritual life as a believer? If not, why not?

- - To what extent or measure is the Holy Spirit involved in bringing you enlightenment of the meaning of Scriptures?

- - Do you, as a true believer, excel at collaborating with the Holy Spirit and God’s timing in circumstances you encounter to gain understanding and application of Scripture passages? If not, why not?

- - Do you, as a true believer, distort the enlightening dynamic of the Holy Spirit working in conjunction with taught Scriptures by practicing it out-of-balance, favoring either the Holy Spirit or the Scriptures while disregarding or minimizing the other?

- - Or do you jeopardize this dynamic by utilizing other supposedly-divine or mystical sources?

- - Logically, what kind of results should the practice of imbalance generate, and the utilizing of other sources generate?

[ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO PONDER (optional if you have time):

- - From this study, is it better to immediately dispense all of the knowledge and understanding you have about Scriptures to a new believer?
 - - Or is it better to instead only feed the new believer a little Scriptural information at a time to allow time for God to do enlightening through the activities of the Holy Spirit? Why?]
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary". *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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