



Looking Inwards (15 mins)
Caring For Each Other

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins)
Concern For Others

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?

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The Last Words Of Jesus
HG125: **When The Counsellor Comes**

John 15:26—16:15

Home Group Study Notes

26 June 2016 - Pauline Woolnough



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION BEFORE THE MEETING!

Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful.



Welcome (10 mins)
Ice Breaker

What has the Counsellor done in your life since the last Home Group meeting?



Looking Upwards (10 mins)
Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



The Last Words Of Jesus
HG125: **When The Counsellor Comes**

John 15:26—16:15

Home Group Sermon Notes

26 June 2016 - Pauline Woolnough

Introduction

It's the night before Jesus goes to the cross, he is sharing a last supper together with his disciples and up to this point Jesus has been talking a lot about love, however from v18 in chapter 15 he starts talking about hatred, hatred of the world towards Himself, towards the Father and towards those who love Him. When he speaks about love he speaks of God's love towards his own but when he speaks of hate it is hatred towards those who belong to God. On accepting Christ as Saviour we are no longer of the world, and the world which is under the rule of Satan, hates us because it hates Jesus. We see evidence of this across the world as Christians are persecuted because of their love of Jesus. The Christian missionary organisation Open Doors (UK) estimates 100 million Christians currently face persecution particularly in Middle Eastern countries. This is not new. Christians have always been persecuted because the ruler of the world hates God, he hates his Son, he hates the gospel and he hates believers.

Jesus tells the disciples that he is leaving, he has made promise after promise of blessings and told them of the Father's love, but he is leaving. They have had good news and they have had bad news and they have been left fearful and with 2 big questions.

1. In his absence, how will Jesus keep his promises of blessings.
2. If Jesus is gone, how on earth will they be able to face a hostile world that is full hatred towards them yet is desperately in need of the gospel.

He has already given them the answer several times, the answer to all their questions and needs is the Holy Spirit, the Counsellor, who Jesus will send to them from the Father. We see again how the roles of the Trinity are so intertwined as in 15.26 Jesus says that the Spirit comes from the Father but is sent by the Son. They are 3 individual Persons but wholly connected in purpose, thought and love. We can never be reminded enough that the Holy Spirit is a Person, he is not a commodity, he does not come at our convenience and fill us up with more of himself. If we want more of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and more of his power working in and through us then it is not so much a case of us having more of him, its about him having more of us. Its about us being more open and available to him on a daily basis rather than us wanting to be "*filled*" now and then for certain occasions and when it suits us.

4: Give examples of times when your witness has been effective and others when it has been ineffective. What made the difference?

5: How are you/we serving God's purpose in your generation? Is there anything you can do as a Home Group?

6: Share the name of an unbelieving friend that everyone in your Home Group can be praying for.



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1: Have you ever come under attack because of your faith in Jesus?

2: What keeps you from sharing the Good News with others?

3: No one asked Jesus where he was going. How do you feel when are not listened to or not given the opportunity to share?

A Word of Warning

From Chapter 16.1-4 Jesus gives the disciples and us some serious words of warning. (Read 16.1-4). Not only is he telling them that he will leave them but he is telling them that they will be hated, persecuted and even killed. They would be thrown out of the synagogue and that may not sound like the end of the world to us but to a Jew the synagogue was an essential part of life and to be shut out meant that all other doors were shut to them, they would be ostracised, yet Jesus even says that the people who killed them would believe they were doing God a service. Its is tragic that in the name of religion men have so often thought that their persecution of others was done in the service of God. We only have to think of Paul and the lengths he went to eliminate Christians and the apostles themselves and early church leaders suffered what Jesus says here. According to traditions and the Bible, eight of the Apostles died as Martyrs, but how the apostles died is not as important as the fact that they were all willing to die for their faith. In modern times we know that millions of Christians are being persecuted and killed by extremists of the Islamic faith who believe they are serving God. Look on Open Doors website and you will see incident after incident of Christians being persecuted because they belong to Christ. The world needs Christ but sadly religion puts many people off him because religion and Satan are the ultimate persecutors of the truth. Persecution comes out of religions that don't know God and do not know Jesus.

Be Prepared

In the midst of the persecution lies our hope, hope in one who will give us all we need to withstand and come through. So we should not be surprised at Christian suffering because in v 4 Jesus says, *“But these things I have spoken to you, so that when the time comes you will remember that I spoke them to you.”* He is saying don't be shocked, be prepared, I am telling you in advance so you will know that I have already told you what was in store. He didn't tell them before, because all the hatred hostility and attacks were directed at Jesus Himself, not at the disciples but with Jesus gone, all of that hostility was going to come to those who have His name.

When the Counsellor Comes

Then in v 5 we come across a sad little verse, where I wonder if we see something of the hurt Jesus carries when He says, *“But now I am going away to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, “Where are you going?”* Jesus had poured out his heart to his friends during a time of farewell, he had comforted them and told them of all the blessings and promises made to them, he told them he was going but not one of them asked him where he was going. His words are, - *“None of you ask me, where are you going.”* How strange is that? How selfish and hurtful does that seem? Perhaps it's reading too much into it but it sounds like the kind of question a friend would ask another when they have said something of great importance and it's been ignored or not listened to, and that can hurt. Think of the questions they could have asked, things we would have loved to know, like, *“Where? What will it be like, what will the Father say to you, when will we join you?”* No-one asked anything, they were too caught up in themselves, but he is so gracious and tells them that it is for their own good that he goes, because unless he goes the Counsellor wont come and whereas Jesus could only be in one place at a time the Holy Spirit can be everywhere all the time. He mentions 4 clear roles that the Holy Spirit fulfils:

1. 15.26: he will testify about Jesus
2. 16.8: he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement
3. 16.12: he will guide us in all truth
4. 16.14: he will bring glory to Jesus

The Spirit Testifies

The first thing that Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will do is testify about him, v 26 *“the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”* The Holy Spirit does not crave or seek attention. It is always his greatest joy to point people to Jesus. He always takes the spotlight off himself and shines it on Jesus. He comes alongside us and extravagantly praises Jesus saying, *“Isn’t he wonderful, do you know what he has done for you, do you know that God sent him for you, do you know that he died for your sins so that you might be forgiven.”* The main reason the Holy Spirit came was in order to testify to Jesus and to help the world know that Jesus is who he claims to be.

We have also been commissioned to testify to the Risen Christ. We are to bear witness and it is the Holy Spirit who will help us carry out that witness. He has been sent to encourage, resource and enable us with that task. We often pray for the Holy Spirit to be more at work in and through us but in order to receive his blessings and power we first of all need to have a heart to testify to Jesus. That needs to be our primary motivation. It is then that we will see the power of the Holy Spirit working through our lives, removing barriers, changing situations, making it possible for us to testify and then seeing people come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. We talk a lot about pioneer ministry these days as if it is something new. Its not, its something we have forgotten and are hopefully returning to. The Holy Spirit is the first and ultimate pioneer minister always out and about looking for new ways to reveal Jesus to people and perhaps he is waking us up to the fact that we all have a pioneer ministry that involves taking Jesus out of the church and onto the streets.

The Holy Spirit convicts about:

Sin The primary ministry of the Holy Spirit is not in the church but in the world convicting people of their sin, their guilt and of judgement. The Apostles were to go out and witness but on their own their witness could never convict anyone about sin and righteousness, that is the job of the Holy Spirit. No one wants to think of themselves as a sinner. Speak to most non believers and they will say that they are a good person, they may give to charity, are kind to animals, never hurt anyone and so on, -not good enough. All good works are worth nothing if we reject Christ. Jesus says in v 9 *“In regard to sin because men do not believe in me.”* The sin that damns us is the sin of rejecting Christ and it is only the Holy Spirit who can reveal that truth to others as we make a path for him through our witness.

Righteousness In a world that creates and worships false gods, out of celebrities, knowledge, material wealth and possessions, it is the Holy Spirit who convicts us that there is only One True God and the only way to Him is through His Son Jesus Christ. It is only by accepting His Son that we can stand before God, righteous, loved and accepted.

Judgement He convicts us about day of judgement and teaches us that unless we are in Christ having accepted him as Saviour then we will stand judged and condemned alongside the ruler of the world. We need to work alongside Him and with Him with a sense of urgency because if Satan, the most powerful evil force in the universe is already under judgement and already condemned why would we think that he would not judge us. We are only safe and saved by Christ and even though it is the Holy Spirit who does the internal work of conviction people wont be saved if they don’t hear, that is our job.

The Spirit of Truth

Jesus tells the disciples that v13 *“when the Spirit comes he will guide them in all truth he will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come.”* There was much that Jesus could not tell the disciples that night because the time was not right, they were too full of emotion and sadness clouded their judgement. It was not until after the resurrection that the penny would drop and the Holy Spirit would glorify Jesus by reminding them what Jesus had told them in the Upper Room. He then would enable them to write a true and accurate account of the life and teachings of Jesus and record them for us and every generation in Holy Scripture. The Spirit of Truth is also our guide and concerned that we understand the true meaning of the Word and not misinterpret it, he wants the truth about Jesus to be known throughout the world and in doing so glorify and magnify Him.

He Glorifies Jesus

The work of the Holy Spirit is immeasurable, without Him we would not be Christians because it is he who leads us to Christ by convicting us of sin, by bringing the gospel to life and by making us see that it is only in Christ and in Christ alone that we have the hope of righteousness and the love of the Father. The Holy Spirit is our Champion as he stands alongside us as our Defence Counsel fending off the enemy’s accusations. He is the presence of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, he is just like Christ and he constantly points us to Christ and the Truth of who he is. He is forever reminding us of what Christ did for us and what he won for us at the cross and he wants to help us apply that knowledge in our life. Without the Holy Spirit we are lifeless, aimless, ineffective, dull, trying to bring in the Kingdom in our own strength, without his power and achieving little. He is everything we need and he calls us all to be on a mission for God, he wants his whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.

Philip Yancey, facing death, asked himself what he had done with his life, its a good question to ask ourselves at any time and hopefully we will be able to look back with pleasure at the times the Holy Spirit was able to work through us to share Jesus with others and if we can’t its never too late to start. Acts 13:36 says *“David served God’s purpose in his generation.”* God called him a man after his own heart. Rick Warren in the Purpose Driven life says this, *“there is no greater epitaph than that statement! Imagine it chiselled on your tombstone: that you served God’s purpose in your generation”* His prayer is that people will say that about himself and also about us because neither past nor future generations can serve God’s purpose in this generation, only we can. Like Esther, God created us, *“for such a time as this,”* Esther 4.14, and he gave us the Counsellor to help us.