

CHURCH.

LESSON 36

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray and commit your group and this course on building Christ's Church to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] HEBREWS 11 - 13
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Take turns and *share* (or *read* from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Hebrews 11 to 13).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) [KEY VERSES IN JOHN] REVIEW KEY VERSES IN JOHN
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Review two by two the last 5 memorised Bible verses from the Gospel of John.

(11) **John 11:25-26.** I AM the resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?

(12) **John 12:32.** But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself.

(13) **John 13:34-35.** A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

(14) **John 14:6.** I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

(15) **John 15:5.** I AM the Vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

4	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) [THE GOSPEL OF JOHN] JOHN 16:1-33
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Introduce. John 14 to 17 consists of the discourses and prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper. In chapter 15 the disciples were instructed what they had to do, but in chapter 16 he predicts what God would do for his disciples.

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
<i>Read.</i> LET US READ John 16:1-33 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

STEP 2. DISCOVER.	OBSERVATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

16:7-11

Discovery 1. The work of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7. Jesus says that it is for the good of the disciples that he is going away, so that the Holy Spirit will come. The departure of (the human nature/body of) Jesus Christ from this earth is not a tragedy, but rather a triumph and a great advantage.

When Jesus was still on earth, he was with his disciples in a limited area. After his ascension into heaven and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ would live in his disciples worldwide!

At this time, Jesus still had to die on the cross and be resurrected from the dead in order to merit the salvation of people. After his ascension into heaven and outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Jesus would apply the merit of his work of salvation to the hearts and lives of believers through the Holy Spirit!

Verse 8. Jesus says, that when the Holy Spirit comes, “he will *convict the world* of:

- guilt in regard to sin because people do not believe in Jesus Christ
- righteousness of Christ which from his invisible presence in heaven saves people
- judgement because people persist in their unbelief, in spite of the fact that the evil one stands condemned

The original word for “convict” (Greek: *elenchó*) in John 16:8 has several good meanings. The work of the Holy Spirit is to *expose* the sin of people, to *convince* them of the truth, to *convict* them of their guilt and to *refute* their arguments against the truth.

(1) The Holy Spirit will expose the sin of the world (verse 9).

He convicts the world of its guilt. He will *expose the sin of the world*, that is, lay bare its sin, especially the fact that the world rejected and killed Jesus Christ. He will not try to destroy people’s sense of guilt, as many people try to do today, but he will awaken the sinner’s conscience to the evil and hatefulness of sin. He will awaken the world to its own sin. Only when people realise and acknowledge their sin, can they repent and be saved.

(2) The Holy Spirit will convince the world of the truth (verse 10).

He convicts the world of what is right, that Christ is right. “The world” is here represented by the Jews, who were about to crucify Jesus and thus brand him as a criminal, that is, as *an unrighteous person* (John 18:30). But by means of the resurrection, Jesus went to the Father. His resurrection proved that God his work of salvation and thus placed his stamp of approval on Jesus and marked him as *the Righteous One* (Acts 3:14-15). When God convicts the world that he and his Christ are “right”, then at the same time he condemns the people of the world that they are “wrong”.

He convicts the world of righteousness, that people who are wrong need the perfect righteousness of Christ, which he acquired through his death and resurrection and that they can only receive this through faith in the completed work of salvation of Christ on the cross.

(3) The Holy Spirit will convict the world of their guilt (verse 11).

He convicts the world of God’s righteous (just) judgement. The Holy Spirit convicts everyone that God’s judgement is very real, just and a serious matter. The completed work of Jesus Christ during his first coming is God’s judgement on sin, sinners and those who promote sin (like Satan, the prince of the world). Jesus came to earth to destroy the work of the devil (1 John 3:8)! Through his exaltation (being lifted up) on the cross, his resurrection, his ascension and his enthronement in heaven Jesus Christ drove the prince of this world out (John 12:31)! Satan now stands condemned (perfect tense) forever!

During the Old Testament period, Satan and his army of evil spirits still had very much power over the nations in the world (Daniel 10:13,20-21).

At the first coming of Christ, at the cross, the evil world and Satan came to stand condemned! The first coming of Jesus resulted in the condemnation of the evil world that opposed, rejected, betrayed and condemned Jesus Christ in trials. It resulted in driving out Satan as the prince of the world (John 12:31; cf. Revelation 12:5-9)! The death, resurrection and sovereign reign of Jesus Christ from heaven made an end to Satan’s stranglehold on the nations (Ephesians 1:20-21; 1 Peter 3:22). The fact that Satan is driven out of this position of power and control in the world means that now in the period between the first coming and the second coming of Jesus Christ, millions and millions of people from every nation of the world are drawn to Jesus Christ (John 12:32)! Satan can no longer hinder the preaching of the gospel to all the nations in the world. He can no longer hinder the salvation of people by Jesus Christ from every nation and language in the world! Satan lost power over the nations and cannot prevent that many people are brought out of his dominion of the evil world (1 John 5:18-19) into the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:13; Revelation 20:1-3).

At the second coming of Christ, Satan’s condemnation will be made manifest to the entire universe when he is cast into the fire of hell (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10). A person who continues to listen to the devil and refuses to turn to Jesus Christ will be doomed together with the devil.

16:12-15

Discovery 2. The work of the Holy Spirit.

(1) The revelation of truth was at that time not yet completed (verse 12).

Jesus said, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.” Jesus Christ had not completed his revelation to his disciples because on the one hand they lacked faith and on the other hand certain events still had to take place. The disciples would still flee and deny him. Jesus still had to be tried, crucified and buried. Thereafter, he still had to be resurrected from the dead, ascend to be enthroned at the right hand of God and pour out the Holy Spirit on his people. Only then he would pour out the Holy Spirit on them! The revelation of Jesus Christ had at that time not yet been completed!

(2) The revelation of truth would be completed through the Spirit of Christ (verse 13).

Jesus said, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” The Holy Spirit would not drive and force them, but lead them like a Guide. He would not be concerned with a part of the truth, but with the whole truth. In the future no more prophets¹ would come to supplement the truth or add to the revelation of the Bible!

Some people today only emphasise certain popular truths or half-truths. The Holy Spirit never stresses one truth at the expense of another truth. The apostle Paul says, “I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God” (Acts 20:27)!

(3) The revelation of truth was indeed completed by the writing of the New Testament (verse 13-15).

This prophecy of Jesus went into fulfilment. His promise that the Holy Spirit would come went into fulfilment in the book of Acts. “The revelation of the whole truth” went into fulfilment by the writing of the four Gospels and the letters of the apostles in the New Testament (cf. 2 Peter 3:1-2,15-16). And his promise that the Spirit would tell them what is yet to come went into fulfilment particularly in the book of Revelation (cf. Revelation 1:1).

Whenever the Holy Spirit guides Christians today, he will never guide them in opposition to the Bible! “The sword of the Holy Spirit” is always the Bible when it is taught and proclaimed (Ephesians 6:17)!

(4) The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ (verse 14).

The Holy Spirit does not draw attention to himself. He empowers Christians to preach Christ. He applies the completed salvation work of Christ to the lives of Christians. He takes what Christ has done, what he is still doing and what he will do as the theme of his teaching. I too experience that the Holy Spirit in me explains the Bible to me as I read it and he makes me love Jesus Christ more and more.

STEP 3. QUESTION.

EXPLANATIONS

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in John 15:1-33 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

16:2-4

Question 1. What is the relationship between John chapter 14, 15 and 16?

Notes. In John chapter 14, the emphasis is on *comfort* (encouragement) In John chapter 15, the emphasis is on *admonition* (*spurring on and warning*). But in John chapter 16, the emphasis is on *prediction* (*prophecy*). Jesus predicted that the Jews would persecute the disciples (John 16:2-4). He predicted that he himself (in his human nature and physical body) was going to leave them (John 16:7). He predicted that the Holy Spirit would come and have great influence in the world (John 16:8-11) and would guide the disciples of Christ into all the truth (John 16:13-15). He predicted that before that happens the disciples would mourn and grieve for a little while, but that their grief would soon turn into joy (John 16:17-23). And he predicted that the disciples would be scattered that same evening (John 16:31-32).

The character of chapter 16 is *predictive* in order to avoid that the disciples would be overcome with grief and disappointment. In the midst of persecution, the disciples might begin to wonder whether it really was true that Jesus Christ had all authority in heaven and on earth. Such disappointment and such questions would have undermined their faith.

The disciples should not be surprised that when the world persecutes them something strange was overcoming them (1 Peter 4:12). Jesus Christ was preparing his disciples for the period of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The New Testament is the period between the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ. It would consist of oppression and persecution of Christians, but also of great influence in the sinful world where very many people would be convicted of sin, righteousness and judgement. And finally this New Testament period would end when the complete triumph of Jesus Christ would become completely visible at his second coming. “In the world you (will) *have* trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world (*and the world remains forever conquered*) (Greek: *nenikéka*) (perfect tense) (John 16:33)!

¹ Prophets like Elymas in the Bible (Acts 13:6-8), Mohammed in Islam and Joseph Smith in Mormonism would NOT supplement (add to) the truth! People who claim that the Paraclete in the Bible (John 14:16-17) refers to Mohammed are wrong, because the Paraclete in the Bible clearly refers to **the Holy Spirit who testifies about Jesus Christ** (John 15:26) and **glorifies Jesus Christ** (John 15:13-15). Even Mohammed himself said that Jesus (Isa) is “the Word of Allah” and “the Spirit of Allah” (Surah 4:171). Compare this to what the Bible said about Jesus Christ 700 years before Mohammed! “**Jesus Christ is the Word of God**” (John 1:1) and “**Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God**” (John 14:18; Romans 8:9-10).

16:16-22

Question 2. What is “the little while” in which Jesus would be absent from his disciples and they would weep and mourn?

Notes. When was Jesus Christ absent from his followers? The disciples wondered what Jesus meant with the following words:

- “Because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer” (John 16:10).
- “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me” (John 16:16).
- “Because I am going to my Father” (John 16:17).
- “You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy” (John 16:20).

Jesus Christ himself announced that the rejection by the evil world (authorities and people) was at hand. First his disciples would not see him *with their physical eyes* for three days (from Friday before sunset to early Sunday morning). He (his body) would lie dead in the tomb. His human spirit was with God in heaven (Luke 23:43,46).

After his resurrection from the dead they saw him for forty days with their physical eyes (Acts 1:3). After that they would *not see him with their physical eyes* for ten days between his ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But Jesus Christ had promised, “I will not leave you as orphans; I (Jesus Christ) will come to you” (John 14:18). After his ascension at Pentecost at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit they would *see him again with their spiritual eyes*, because “he would be with them always to the very end of the age (the present world)” (Matthew 28:20).

There are Christians who think that Christians should fast during the whole New Testament period. Jesus had said, “How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast” (Mark 2:19-20; Matthew 9:15-17). Only during the time that Jesus was not with his disciples, they would cry and mourn and fast. But after his resurrection from the dead and especially after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit Jesus is always with them. The tenor of the New Testament is not mourning and fasting, but joy and feasting!

Zachariah 8:19 already prophesied 420 years B.C., “The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah.” (Think of Easter, Ascension and Pentecost!) Thus, “the short time” is a reference to the period between his death and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (and not a reference to the whole New Testament period until his second coming)! After his resurrection from the dead and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (who is the Spirit of Jesus Christ)(1 Peter 1:11) no one and nothing can take their joy away from them (Acts 13:52; Galatians 5:22)!

16:23-24

Question 3. What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus Christ?

Notes. To pray in the name of Jesus Christ has two aspects:

(1) Praying in the name of Jesus Christ is praying on the basis of the merit of Christ.

God gives on the basis of the merit of Jesus Christ. A more accurate translation of John 16:23 is, “In that day you will no longer ask me (e.g. Jesus) anything. I tell you the truth, whatever you ask the Father (e.g. God), he will give you in my Name. Jesus Christ promised first that God would give to Christians in harmony with his whole plan of salvation that centres in Jesus Christ! God the Father gives forgiveness of sins and answers to prayers on the basis of his love for Jesus Christ and on basis of the sacrifice of atonement for sins which Jesus Christ brought.

Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and people through his completed work of salvation on the cross. As Mediator Jesus Christ opened the way from God to people. There is no other Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5)! In other religions God has no open way to people. In other religions sins are not atoned! God does not listen to the prayers of sinners whose sins are not forgiven (Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 1:23-33, Isaiah 1:15; 59:1-2)! Their sins continue to make a separation between the God of the Bible and people. If Jesus Christ had not died for sins, then God’s perfect holiness and righteousness would prevent him from forgiving unholy and unrighteous people and prevent him from listening to their prayers.²

Christians ask on the ground of the merit of Jesus Christ. John 16:24 says, “Until now you have not asked for anything in my Name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” Before the disciples became Christians, they belonged to God’s Old Testament people, Israel, and when they prayed they directed their prayers directly to God. They only used the Name “LORD”. For example, in Psalm 17 David begins his prayer with, “O LORD, hear my righteous plea; listen to my cry.” God’s Old Testament people called God only “LORD” or “God”. They never ended their prayer in the Name of Jesus Christ. They looked forward to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in whom the LORD would bless all the nations (Genesis 22:18).

² God hears their prayers, but does not answer them.

But now the Messiah, Jesus Christ, had come. He was at the point of being crucified in order to make atonement for sins. His death and resurrection would be the way by which the LORD would bless all the nations. As Mediator Jesus Christ also opened the way from man to God. If Jesus Christ had not died for sins, unholy and unrighteous people would never have been allowed or able to enter into the presence of the holy and righteous God (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Timothy 6:16)! But according to Ephesians 2:18 and 3:12 Christians now have access to God the Father and may freely and confidently come before him. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

(2) Praying in the name of Jesus Christ is praying according to the will of Christ.

1 John 5:14 says, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”

As Mediator, Jesus Christ revealed the nature and character of God. Why is knowing the character and will of God important for prayer? As Mediator, Jesus Christ revealed the essence and character of God. Some people believe in idols. The essence and character of idols is that they are man-made and dead. They cannot hear or answer prayer (Psalm 115:6) and they cannot do anything good (or evil) to man (Jeremiah 10:5). Other people believe in gods who are fickle and unpredictable³. To such gods nobody knows how to pray. But the Living God of the Bible has revealed his character. For example, because he is holy, we know we cannot ask for unholy things. Because he is merciful, we know we can ask for forgiveness. Because he is faithful, we know we can ask for his help. Therefore, the better we know God’s character, the better we know how to pray!

As Mediator, Jesus Christ also revealed the will of God. To pray in the name of Jesus Christ, is to pray in harmony with Christ’s revealed will. Pray in accordance with *his revealed will* in the Bible and pray in dependent trust for things that belongs to *his hidden will*. If Jesus Christ is the Lord and Master, then Christians will not pray for anything that is against his will, because that would displease him.

Therefore, to pray in the name of Jesus Christ is to pray with confidence for all things that are in harmony with the revealed will of God and to pray for anything that advances the kingdom and glory of God!

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from John 16:1-33.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from John 16:1-33.

- 16:8-10. When you proclaim the gospel message be convinced that God himself through his Holy Spirit will expose the sins of people, convince them of the truth in the Bible and convict them of the coming judgement if they fail to respond.
- 16:12-15. After his resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heaven, Jesus still revealed much to his apostles through the Holy Spirit. All these revelations were recorded and with these the New Testament was completed.
- 16:13. The Holy Spirit still guides you into the truth today, but never in so-called truths that are against the already revealed truths of the Bible! He also does not reveal any truths that you may add to the Bible!
- 16:19-22. You may live a life of joy, because Jesus Christ is risen and alive and present.
- 16:24. You may pray with confidence, because Jesus is the Mediator between God and you and the Mediator between you and God.
- 16:33. Never forget that in this world you will experience trouble. But also never forget that Jesus Christ has already overcome the world and the world is in a state of subjection to Christ. That is why you are able to do the greater works through the power and promise of Jesus Christ (cf. John 14:12).

2. Examples of personal applications from John 16:1-33.

I am greatly encouraged that persecution and suffering does not necessarily mean that I have done something wrong toward God and that God is punishing me. I am now convinced that persecution and suffering is part of being a Christian. Jesus Christ predicted that it would happen. I should therefore not be surprised as if something strange overcomes me when people hate me or persecute me. I am looking forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ and the renewal of this earth, when his complete victory over all evil people will become a complete reality forever!

I am fully convinced that the book of Acts describes in detail how the prediction of Jesus concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Church and his great influence on earth was fulfilled. I am fully convinced that the Holy Spirit guided the disciples of Christ into all the truth, so that they were able to record the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in the

³ Surah 74:31 says, “Thus Allah sendeth astray whom He will, and whom He will He guideth.

Gospels and to teach the meaning of Christ's completed work of salvation to us in the letters they wrote in the New Testament. I am fully convinced that the Holy Spirit has told the disciples of Jesus what was to come in the future and that these predictions have been recorded in the letters of Paul, Peter and John and especially in the book of Revelation.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in John 16:1-33. (Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[INTERCESSION] PRAY FOR OTHERS
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Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray with one another for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	[ASSIGNMENT] FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples and build Christ's Church.
2. Preach, teach or study the Bible study of John 16 together with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time with God from half a chapter of **James 1 – 3** each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. Meditate and memorise the new Bible verse. (1) Love by spending: **2 Corinthians 12:14-15**. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
6. Update your notebook on building Christ's Church. Include your notes on personal time with God, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.