

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series you may learn how to build up the Christian Church. Two teachers will do Bible study together from John chapter 16. We will use “the five steps” method of Bible study. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. You may join our Bible study every week by preparing for the next Bible study. You may also gather a few people around you and use this method of studying the Bible together. Doing Bible study together with a few other Christians is one of the best ways to grow to maturity as a Christian.

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Let us read John chapter 16 together. When you are two or more people, take turns to read one verse each until you have completed the reading. Due to shortage of time, please read John chapter 16 for yourself.

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in John chapter 16. “Which truth in this passage is important for you?” or “Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?” Think and write your answer in your notebook. After a few minutes take turns to share your discoveries with one another.

(S) An important truth for me is in John 16:7-11 about the work of the Holy Spirit. 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 Jesus in his bodily form is not a tragedy, but an advantage and a triumph.

While on earth, Jesus was *with* his disciples, but through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ would live *in* his disciples! While on earth at this time, Jesus still had to die on the cross and be resurrected and thus merit the salvation of people. But through the Holy Spirit, Jesus would apply the merit of salvation to the hearts and lives of believers!

Jesus says, that when the Holy Spirit comes, “he will *convict the world* of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgement, because the prince of this world now stands condemned”. The work of the Holy Spirit is to *expose* the sin of people, *convince* them of the truth and to *convict* them of their guilt.

First. The Holy Spirit will convict the world with respect to sin.

He will lay bare the sin of the world, especially the fact that they 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 acknowledge their sin, can they repent and be saved.

Second. The Holy Spirit will also convict the world with respect to righteousness.

*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. The resurrection proves that God 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 is *right*, then at the same time he condemns the people of the world that they are *wrong*. The Holy Spirit will convict the world of Christ’s perfect righteousness and of how to become righteous, that is, justified by Christ’s completed work of salvation on the cross.

Third. The Holy Spirit will also convict the world of 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, on sinners and on those who promote sin, like Satan, who is called ‘the prince of the world’. 1 John 3:8 says that the reason Jesus Christ was born at his first coming, was to destroy Satan’s work! John 12:31-32 speaks of the lifting up of Jesus from the earth and this refers to his death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heaven. It teaches that the coming of Jesus was the time to judge the world and to drive out the prince of the world! At the cross, the evil world and Satan stand condemned! The first coming of Jesus resulted in the judgement of the evil world, which opposed, rejected, betrayed and condemned Jesus Christ. And the first coming of Jesus also resulted in the driving out of Satan as the prince of the world (cf. Rev 12)! Daniel 10:13,20-21 relates that during the Old Testament period, Satan and his army of evil spirits still had very much power over the nations in the world. However, the death, resurrection and rule of Jesus Christ from heaven made an end of Satan’s stranglehold on the nations (Eph 1:20-21; 1 Pet 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 his first coming and the second coming of Jesus Christ,

Jesus Christ draws millions and millions of people from every nation of the world to himself! Satan can no longer hinder the preaching of the gospel to the nations. Satan can no longer prevent the salvation of people from every nation and language in the world! By the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and by his resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heaven, Satan lost his power over the nations and he cannot keep the nations from hearing the gospel any more. He cannot keep many people from being robbed out of his kingdom and brought over into the kingdom of Christ (cf. Rev 20:1-3). Matthew 12:29 teaches that Satan *is now bound* and people are robbed out of his power and brought into the kingdom and powerful control of Jesus Christ (Col 1:13). At the second coming, Satan's condemnation will be made manifest to the entire universe when he is cast into the fire of hell (Rev 20:10). A person that continues to follow the advice of the devil and refuses to repent stands condemned along with the devil. I too have experienced this wonderful work of the Holy Spirit in my life.

(T) An important truth for me is in John 16:7-11 about the work of the Holy Spirit.

First. The revelation of truth was not yet completed at the time before the crucifixion.

In John 16:12, Jesus says, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear." Jesus Christ did not complete his revelation to them at this time, because of their lack of faith and because certain events still had to take place. The disciples would still flee and deny him. And Jesus still had to be tried, crucified and buried. Thereafter, he still had to be resurrected, ascend to heaven, be enthroned in heaven and pour out the Holy Spirit on people. The salvation work of Jesus Christ had not yet been completed!

Second. The revelation of truth would be completed through the Spirit of Christ.

In John 16:13 Jesus says that after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit would guide the disciples of Christ into all the truth. The Holy Spirit would not drive and force them, but lead them like a guide. He would be concerned with all the truth and not just part of the truth. Some Christians today always 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).

Third. The revelation of truth was indeed completed by the writing of the New Testament.

This prophecy of Jesus went into fulfilment as follows: "The Spirit will come" went into fulfilment in the book of Acts. "The Spirit will guide you into all the truth" went into fulfilment particularly in the Letters of the apostles in the New Testament. "The Spirit will tell you what is yet to come" went into fulfilment particularly in the book of Revelation. Whenever the Holy Spirit guides Christians today, he will never guide them in opposition to the Bible! Every religious book that says things in opposition to the Bible does not originate from the Holy Spirit! The 'sword of the Holy Spirit' is always the Bible when it is taught and proclaimed! (Eph 6:17)

Fourth. The Holy Spirit will glorify Christ.

The Holy Spirit does not draw attention to himself. He empowers Christians to preach Jesus Christ. He applies the completed salvation work of Jesus Christ to the lives of Christians. He takes what Jesus Christ has done, is doing and 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.

(S) **STEP 3. QUESTION**

Let us try to understand all the truths in John chapter 16 and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. "Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask to the group?" Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions and try to find answers.

**1<sup>st</sup> Question. What is the relationship between John chapter 14, 15 and 16?**

(T) In John chapter 14, the emphasis is on *comfort*. In John chapter 15, the emphasis is on *admonition*. But in John chapter 16, the emphasis is on *prediction*. Jesus predicted that the disciples would be persecuted by the Jews. He predicted that he himself in his physical body was going to leave them. He predicted that the disciples would mourn for a little while. He predicted that the Holy Spirit would come to the Christians, would have great influence in the world and would guide the disciples in the whole truth. And he predicted that the disciples would that very evening be scattered.

The character of John 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 become disappointed with Christ. They might begin to wonder whether it really was true that he had the authority to control everything in the universe. Such disappointment and such questions would have undermined their faith. The disciples should not be surprised when the world persecutes them as if something strange was overcoming them (1 Pet 4:12). Jesus Christ was preparing them for the period of the Holy Spirit. This period between the first coming and the second coming of Jesus Christ would involve persecution and suffering for Christians, but also great influence in the world where very many people would be convicted of sin,

righteousness and judgement. And finally this period would end when the fact that Jesus Christ had overcome the world, would become completely visible (33)!

**2<sup>nd</sup> Question.** (16:16-22). What is 'the little while' in which Jesus would be absent from his disciples and they would weep and mourn?

(S) When was Jesus Christ absent from his followers? In John 16:16-22, Jesus himself said, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." Then he explained to them what he meant. "You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ... Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy." Jesus Christ himself explained that his rejection by the evil political and religious leaders and people of both the Jews and the Romans was at hand. Jesus Christ predicted that he would be condemned to death and would be taken away from them in death for a little while. John 16 says that during that time they would weep and mourn. Matthew 9:15-17 says that during that time they would fast. Thus, 'the little while' in which Jesus would be absent from his disciples and during which they would mourn and fast, was the time between his death and resurrection. After his resurrection, no one will be able to take away their joy!

**3<sup>rd</sup> Question.** (16:23-24). What is the first meaning of the words "to pray in the name of Jesus Christ"?

(T) The first aspect of prayer in the name of Jesus Christ is written in John 16:23-24. John 16:23 says, "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you *ask in my name.*" Actually, a more correct translation should say, "I tell you the truth, whatever you ask the Father he will *give you in my name.*" Not only the *asking* is in Christ's name, also the *giving* is in Christ's name! God the Father will give in harmony with his entire salvation plan that centres in God the Son. God the Father will give on the basis of his love for Jesus Christ and on the basis of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

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." How did the disciples pray before they became Christians? All the disciples were Jews. The Jews addressed themselves directly to God. They did not make any mention of another name. For example, in Psalm 17, King David starts his prayer with "Hear, O Lord, my righteous plea; listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer." The Jews called God directly by his name "Lord" or "God". They also did not close their prayers in the name of God. But the Jews were looking forward to the coming Messiah, in whom God would bless all the nations on earth (Gen 22:18). Now the Messiah had come. He was about to die for the sins of the world. His death and resurrection would be the way God would bless all the nations on earth. Through his completed salvation work on the cross, Jesus Christ would be *the Mediator between people and God*, but also *the Mediator between God and people!* People would *pray in the name of Jesus Christ* to God the Father, and God the Father would *give in the name of Jesus Christ* to people.

Why is the death and resurrection of Christ important for prayer? *As Mediator, Jesus Christ opened the way to God.* If Jesus had not died for our sins, then our sins would still have stood between us and God. And according to Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 1:23-33 and Isaiah 1:15, God would not have listened to our prayers at all! But Jesus Christ did die for our sins and he was resurrected. Therefore the Bible says that "We have access to the Father in heaven". Ephesians 2:18 and 3:12 teaches that "we may approach God with freedom and confidence". 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."

*Therefore, to pray in the name of Jesus Christ is to pray with confidence that God listens and that God will give! It is to pray on the basis of Christ's merits, that is, on the basis of Christ's completed work of salvation on the cross.*

**4<sup>th</sup> Question.** What is the second meaning of the words "to pray in the name of Jesus Christ"?

(S) The second aspect of prayer in the name of Jesus Christ is written in 1 John 5:14. It says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

One. Praying to other gods.

Some people believe in idols that are made of wood, stone or metal. Other people believe in a god that is made up by philosophers or false prophets. The essence and character of material gods and of invented gods are that they are man-made. They are dead. These gods do not really exist. They only exist in the minds of their worshippers and their religious leaders. These gods cannot hear prayer, they cannot do anything to help people and they cannot save people from sin and evil.

Even more dangerous is the fact that evil spirits like to hide behind idols and behind the teachings of false prophets and teachers (1 Tim 4:1). Evil spirits do exist and they pretend to be god. Evil spirits want people to believe in them. Evil spirits want people to worship them. Evil spirits will use every possible means to bind people to themselves. Evil spirits are fickle and unpredictable. To a god that has an evil spirit hiding behind it nobody knows how to pray.

Two. Praying to the God who revealed himself in the Bible and in Jesus Christ.

*As Mediator, Jesus Christ revealed the nature and character of the one and only God, the God of the Bible! Why is knowledge of the character and will of God important for prayer? As Mediator, Jesus Christ revealed the essence and character of the God of the Bible. Because the Living God has revealed his character, Christians know that they can pray for things in agreement with God's character. For example, because the God of the Bible is holy, we know we cannot ask for unholy things. Because he is the Living God, we know we cannot ask for holy wars and the killing of people. Because he is merciful, we know we can ask for forgiveness. Because he is faithful, we know we can ask for his help. Because he is almighty, we can ask him to change us. Therefore, the better we know the character of the God of the Bible, 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. If Jesus Christ is the Lord and Master, then Christians will not pray for anything that is against his will. Christians know it 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 character of God and the revealed will of God. It is to pray for anything that advances the kingdom and glory of God!*

**(T) STEP 4 and 5. APPLY and PRAY.**

After brainstorming with one another and recording a list of *possible applications*, consider which possible application God wants you to turn into a *personal application*. Then take turns to pray about one truth that God has taught us in John chapter 16.

**(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Make a commitment to do Bible study every week. Prepare next week's Bible study. Use "the five steps" method to prepare John chapter 17.

Second. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. See the workbooks "Go and build Christ's Church" and Internet on [www.dota.net](http://www.dota.net)

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".