



J. Kirk Richards, "The Greatest in the Kingdom"

24. The Farewell Discourses in John (John 14–17)

Christ's Imminent Departure. The "Comforter" and Peace. The Paraclete Sayings—the Spirit as Helper, Interpreter/Teacher, Witness, Prosecutor, Revealer/Guide. Jesus, the True Vine; Again, Christ's Imminent Departure; The Way, the Truth, and the Life; "As I Have Loved You . . ."; The Intercessory Prayer.

"Father in Heaven" (hymn no. 133)

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27)

1. Father in Heaven, in thy love abounding,
Hear these thy children thru the world resounding,
Loud in thy praises. Thanks for peace abiding,
Ever abiding.
2. Filled be our hearts with peace beyond comparing,
Peace in thy world, and joy to hearts despairing.
Firm is our trust in thee for peace enduring,
Ever enduring.
3. God of our fathers, strengthen ev'ry
nation
In thy great peace, where only is
salvation.
So may the world its future spread
before thee, Thus to adore thee.

From the Last Supper to Gethsemane

- The “Farewell Discourses” appear to have been delivered first in the upper room where the Last Supper was held and then progress along the path to the Mount of Olives
 - In 14:31 Jesus had said, “Arise, let us go hence.” Was chapter 15 delivered on the way to the Mount of Olives, where the disciples may actually have seen vines as they walked?
 - No scene is given for the Intercessory Prayer in chapter 17 that follows the discourses. Was it given as part of the Gethsemane experience?
- **Important themes**
 - **Christ’s departure but continued presence in the spirit**
 - **Love**
 - **Obedience as a product of love**
 - **The role of “Comforter(s)”**
 - **“In-dwelling” of Deity: the Father in Christ, Christ in disciples, the Holy Ghost with disciples**
 - **Unity**
- **Characteristics of the Discourses:** Powerfully intimate (to the original disciples but feel like they are addressed to the reader), full of “semi-poetic” divine speech, focus on **Jesus’ nature and purpose**

Structural Analysis of the Farewell Discourses

- **Part 1A**
 - **Christ’s Departure:** Jesus the Way to the Father (14:1–14)
 - **Promise of the Holy Spirit or “Paraclete”** (14:15–27)
 - **Paraclete** (Greek *paraklētos*): “helper, intercessor, advocate . . . one called to help” (see D&C 45:3–5)
 - translated in KJV as “Comforter” (comfort originally meant “strengthening aid, assistance,” and not just “consolation”)
 - **Peace and the Love of the Father** (14:28–31)
- **Part 2**
 - **Jesus the True Vine, his continuing presence** (15:1–17)
 - The Hatred of the World (15:18–16:4a)
- **Part 1B**
 - **Christ’s Departure:** The Work of the Spirit (16:4b–15)
 - **Christ’s Departure:** Sorrow Will Turn to Joy (16:16–24)
 - **Peace and the Love of the Father** (16:25–33)
 - Chs. 15–16 out of order, or is ch. 16 largely a repetition or reaffirmation of the themes of ch. 14, focusing chiastically on Jesus’ continuing presence as “the vine”?
- **Part 3**
 - **The Great Intercessory Prayer** (17:1–26)

Jesus the Way to the Father (14:1–6)

Part 1A: Christ's Departure

- “In my Father’s house are **many rooms**; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” (14:2–3 NIV)
- **“many rooms”** (Greek *monai*, KJV “mansions”): our “mansions” are still part of the Father’s house; LDS scholar Jack Welch has connected this to temple imagery of “chambers” (i.e., stages of ritual progression)
- “Jesus saith unto him, ***I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***” (14:6)

Jesus and the Father (14:7–14)

Part 1A: Christ's Departure

- “Philip saith unto him, ‘Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.’ Jesus saith unto him, ‘Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . .**’” (14:9)
- **Jesus is like his father in every way, particularly in his moral character and nature**
 - See Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Grandeur of God,” *Ensign*, Nov 2003, 7off: “In word and in deed Jesus was trying to reveal and make personal to us the true nature of His Father, our Father in Heaven.”
- **As a type, physically (at least post-resurrection) Jesus completely mirrors his Father**
 - Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith*, 5:2: “The Son being filled with the fullness of the mind, glory, and power; or, in other words, the spirit, glory, and power, of the Father, possessing all knowledge and glory, and the same kingdom, sitting at the right hand of power, **in the express image and likeness of the Father.**”
- **The “In-Dwelling” of the Father in the Son (14:10–12)**
 - “Believest thou that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? . . . The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (14:10)
- **Because the Father loves Jesus, he will answer prayers in his name!** (14:13–14)

Role of the “Comforter”

Part 1A: Christ’s Departure

- **Promise of the Holy Spirit or Paraclete (14:15–26)**
 - **Paraclete** (*paraklētos*): “helper, intercessor, advocate . . . **one called to help**,” translated in KJV as “Comforter” (cf. D&C 45:3–5, where Christ stands at our side as an advocate)
- **First Paraclete Saying: The Spirit as Helper** (implied, 14:15–17)
 - “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (14:15–16)
 - “another Comforter” requires or implies a “**First Comforter**,” identified elsewhere as the Holy Ghost sent to be our “helper”
- **On the Second Comforter**
 - Loving Christ and keeping his commandments leads to the sending of **another Comforter**, identified as Christ himself: “Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself . . .” (*TPJS*, 149)
 - “I shall not leave you orphans; I shall come to you.” (14:18 NJB, see LDS KJV note 18a; “comfortless” = *orphanous* > **Christ will come and be our Father!**)
 - Heavenly Father > gave our spirits life
 - Earthly father/parents > gave our bodies life
 - **Christ > will give us eternal life**

More on the “Comforter”

Part 1A: Christ’s Departure

- **Second Paraclete Saying: The Spirit as Interpreter or Teacher (14:25–26)**
 - “But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall **teach** you all things, and **bring all things to your remembrance**, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (14:26)
- **Peace and the Love of the Father (14:27–31)**
 - “**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you**: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (14:27)

Jesus the True Vine (15:1–17)

Part 2: Christ's Continuing Presence



- In 14:31 Jesus had said, “Arise, let us go hence.” Was chapter 15 delivered on the way to the Mount of Olives, where the disciples may actually have seen vines as they walked?
- “He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. **Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.**” (15:2 NRSV)
 - KJV “purgeth” = *kathairei* (cleanse, make pure > of branches, “prune”)
 - How can our trials and struggles be considered “pruning” intended to help us bring forth more fruit?
- **“Abide in me, and I in You”**
 - As a tree’s branches as sustained by its sap and a vine’s branches by its stem, so is the believer sustained by the spirit and love of Christ
 - “. . . Continue in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.” (14:9b–10)
 - **“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”** (15:12–13)
 - Drawing upon the love that we draw from Christ, our “fruit” as branches of the vine should be love and sacrifice for each other

The Hatred of the World (15:18–16:4a)

Part 2: Christ's Continuing Presence

- “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but **I have chosen you out of the world**, therefore **the world hateth you.**” (15:19)
- **Third Paraclete Saying: The Spirit as Witness** (15:26–27)
 - “When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, **he will be my witness.**” (15:26 NJB)

The Work of the Spirit

Part 1B: Christ's Departure

- “Still, I am telling you the truth: it is for your own good that I am going, because **unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.**” (16:7 NJB)
 - Do not make too much of this; the sense is that **the witness of the spirit is greater than the witness of physical sight and proof** (see 20:29; 3 Nephi 15:23). *Be careful of theories such as “two members of the Godhead can never be on the earth at the same time”*
- **The Work of the Spirit**
 - **Fourth Paraclete Saying: The Spirit as Prosecutor (16:8-11)**
 - “When he comes, he will **convict** the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me.” (16:8-9 NIV; cf. D&C 84:49-50)
 - **Convict** (Greek *elengxei*; KJV “reprove,” which works with sin but not righteousness or judgement!)
 - **Fifth Paraclete Saying: The Spirit as Revealer or Guide (16:12-15)**
 - “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . .” (16:13a)

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Paraclete or “Comforter” Sayings Reviewed

Paraclete (Greek *paraklētōs*): “helper, intercessor, advocate . . . one called to help”

- **First Paraclete Saying: The Spirit as Helper (14:15-17)**
 - “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (14:15-16)
 - **Jesus as Second or “Other” Comforter**
 - “I shall not leave you orphans; I shall come to you.” (14:18 NJB, see LDS KJV note 18a; “comfortless” = *orphanous* > Christ will come and be our Father!)
 - **Heavenly Father > gave our spirits life**
 - **Earthly father/parents > gave our bodies life**
 - **Christ > will give us eternal life**
- **Second Paraclete Saying: The Spirit as Interpreter or Teacher (14:25-26)**
 - “But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and **bring all things to your remembrance**, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (14:26)
- **Third Paraclete Saying: The Spirit as Witness (15:26-27)**
 - “When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, **he will be my witness.**” (15:26 NJB)
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Joy and Peace

Part 1B: Christ's Departure

- **Christ's Departure: Sorrow Will Turn to Joy (16:16–24)**
 - “Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. **A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.**” (16:20-21)
 - Powerful image: *the life that Christ brings into the world is the eternal life of each of us!*
- **Peace and the Love of the Father (16:25–33)**
 - “I have said these things to you in figures of speech (KJV, “proverbs”). The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father.” (16:25 NRSV)
 - “**For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me**, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, **I leave the world, and go to the Father.**” (16:27-28)
 - “Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech.” (16:29 NIV)
 - “**These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.** In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; **I have overcome the world.**” (16:33)

¹ These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,

- Father, the hour is come;
glorify thy Son,
that thy Son also may glorify thee:
- ² As thou hast given him power over all flesh,
that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.
- ³ And this is life eternal,
that they might know thee the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
- ⁴ I have glorified thee on the earth:
I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.
- ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self
with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.
- ⁶ I have manifested thy name unto the men
which thou gavest me out of the world:
thine they were, and thou gavest them me;
and they have kept thy word.
- ⁷ Now they have known
that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.
- ⁸ For I have given unto them the words
which thou gavest me;
and they have received them,
and have known surely that I came out from thee,
and they have believed that thou didst send me.

Jesus' Prayer for Himself

First Stanza of the Intercessory Prayer (17:1–8)

- Often described as Jesus' “High Priestly Prayer,” this presents a beautiful piece of poetry, divided into three stanzas.
- Offered presumably on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane
- “Father, the hour is come; **glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee**: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” (17:1b–2)
- “**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**” (17:3)
 - **Eternal life = the kind of life that God and Christ have in their presence**
 - **Yet remember the broader meaning in John: spirit-filled life**
 - “knowing” here must mean more than knowing about them . . . We must² know as we are known”
 - “They who dwell in his presence are the church of the Firstborn; and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace” (D&C 76:94)

9 I pray for them:
I pray not for the world,
but for them which thou hast given me;
for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine,
and thine are mine;
and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world,
but these are in the world,
and I come to thee.

Holy Father, keep through thine own name
those whom thou hast given me,
that they may be one, as we *are*.

12 While I was with them in the world,
I kept them in thy name:
those that thou gavest me I have kept,
and none of them is lost,
but the son of perdition;
that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee;
and these things I speak in the world,
that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word,
and the world hath hated them,
because they are not of the world,
even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world,
but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world,
even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth:
thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world,
even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself,
that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Jesus' Prayer for Disciples

Second Stanza of the Intercessory Prayer (17:9–19)

- **“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.” (17:9)**
 - Cf. again with the stirring image of D&C 45:3–5
- Verse 11b: Compare with other “**oneness**” passages in John: 10:30 and 17:21–23; also 14:9
 - LDS exegesis usually interprets this in line with the concept of unity, particular their being “one in purpose”
 - Interestingly the Greek for **one** is *hen* (neuter singular), whereas the LXX uses *heis* (masculine singular) in Deut 6:4 passage where the Lord is “one [God].”
- **“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (17:17)**
 - In English “sanctify” means primarily “cleanse,” but the Greek *hagiazō* means both this and “**make holy**” (or “make like God”).

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20 Neither pray I for these alone,
but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one;
as thou, Father, *art* in me,
and I in thee,
that they also may be one in us:
that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;
that they may be one,
even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me,
that they may be made perfect in one;
and that the world may know that thou hast sent me,
and hast loved them,
as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me,
be with me where I am;
that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me:
for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee:
but I have known thee,
and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name,
and will declare *it*:
that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,
and I in them.

Prayer for All: Unity and Love

Third Stanza of the Intercessory Prayer
(17:20–26)

- **“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us”**
- **Final petition of the prayer is about love**
 - “. . . that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (17:26)
- **Jesus ends the Intercessory prayer and sets forth to accomplish what he must to bring his prayer to pass—making us “at one” with the Father through the Atonement!**

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