

“The So That’s”

John 13-16

Mike Davis

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Mike: Brother Don, would you just lead us into a quiet time of meditation? (*Music*)

Father, we thank You and praise You for the incredible, beautiful morning that You’ve given to us today. Thank You, Lord, that we have the opportunity to get together here as brothers and consider Your word. Thank You, Lord, for the opportunity that You’ve given me to speak here this morning. And I’m not sure how that happens, but You use us in ways that You prepare us for. And so I thank You for that opportunity. And Lord, may we each be in tune to the Spirit of God as we look through Your word, as we listen, as we look, as we study and think about things. Lord, may Your Spirit work in each of our hearts.

And Father, may You bless Nancy this morning. I think of her difficulty in swallowing, and as Ted brought up her difficulties with age; as we get older, things happen. And we pray, Lord, that You would speak healing into her body, that Your hand would be upon her, that You’d give her comfort and give the doctors whatever direction they need to see her, and Lord, that she would be able to find some relief from this problem.

We ask, Lord, for Your hand upon Bruce Bickel. Thank You for the incredible man of God and the incredible teacher that he has been his entire life. And we thank You for what he’s been able to accomplish. Lord, may You comfort him; may You let him sense Your presence with him. May this be a steady constant in his life day in and day out for both he and his wife; Lord, we thank You, Lord, for them.

And Father, we lift up Tab to you. We think of Jeff and Tab; we lift them up to You, Lord, and ask that You would give them comfort as they struggle through these difficult days, that You would speak healing into Tabatha’s life, Lord, that she would find relief from the cancer, relief from the diabetes, relief from all the difficulties that she has, and Lord, that You would give her incredible comfort, that they would be able to walk together through the end of their days, Lord—each of them, Jeff and Tab—that they’d walk together and get strength one from another, and Lord, that You would be in their midst in the kind of way that they would sense Your presence right there with them as they go through these difficult days.

Lord, we do thank You so much for Reverend Billy that Ted brought up. We thank You for his life. Lord, we pray for Your hand upon his family as they mourn his loss. And we give You praise and we give You thanks in this beautiful morning today, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Mike: Well, it’s good to see all of you gentlemen here this morning. It’s good to have us up and out of bed and drinking coffee and moving forward here today. You know, it’s interesting. It seems to me that the last two or three months—the last one was last night—I’ve had quite a few different individuals—I think I’m up to about five right now—that have told me that they have walked away from the faith, that they have given up, that there is no God. And these are people that have been involved in church. One guy told me that he grew up in the church as a teenager and did missions trips as a young man and did a lot of things. And he has walked away from God. He said, “I think I’m an atheist now.”

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Last night I was talking to a guy. He has wanted to get together to discuss it, but he is talking about how he has completely walked away from the faith. I just heard of a youth pastor three days ago that has completely walked away from the faith. The youth pastor just said, “That’s it; I’m done; I can’t do this anymore. I don’t believe there’s a God.”

We’re watching these things begin to happen more and more and more. These things have always happened. maybe it’s just me, but it seems to me that there’s a rise of this kind of thing going on around us as we’re watching our world begin to crumble as we knew it. Most of us here are a bunch of old guys. And as we think about what we know of from when we grew up and what we’ve seen, and watch the changes in our world,—not just the U.S.; the U.S. is really big in all this—but watching the changes in our world.

There’s a lot of fear, right? People are walking in fear really, really big. People are walking with great anxieties, and they want God to fix it. “Fix it, God, okay?” And when God doesn’t fix it, and there’s watching things happen, the big thing I hear a good bit anymore is well, if God is real, if God is loving, why does He let all this garbage go on?

And you know, that’s exactly the wrong question; it’s 180 degrees off, because God is real; God is good. So the question isn’t if God is good, or if God is love. The statement is that God is good. You know, we can go through the 28 attributes of God according to Bruce Bickel and according to Scripture that Bruce brought to us. We can go through the 28 attributes of God and see all of the different things about God. And God is those things. It’s not “if God”; it’s “God is”; that’s the premise we start with, and then we build from there, all right? And we begin to look at things then through God’s eyes as opposed to through our eyes, our own way of looking at things.

And as I think about fear, the root of fear is pride, arrogance, independence. The root of fear is an independent spirit where we don’t want to trust in God; we don’t want to give our trust over. We want to hold on to it; we want to be in charge. So the root of fear is arrogance and pride, as we think that we can handle these things. And we’re not turning to the Lord.

Either fix it or face it; those are the two things. We want God to do something. “Fix it, Jesus!” And people want God to fix everything. Well God did that once; it was called Noah’s flood. (*Laughter*) And we don’t want that to happen again; we’re not looking for that right now, not necessarily. Anyway, we want God to fix it.

But the real thing is that we should face the problems and face the storms. As men it’s not about that we need everything fixed. We don’t need everything fixed. We need to learn how to face the storms of life as we are walking through this life. I just read a couple of days ago where Jesus said, “*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*” We have victory in Him—not victory in us, but victory in Him, right? And we all agree on those things. Yes, Don?

Don Maurer: Mike, I think it’s ironic that the same people who say “Why doesn’t God fix everything?” are the same people—and I have a neighbor who says this—well, you just can’t face life. That’s why you’re a Christian; you just can’t face reality and face life the way it is. They want to have their cake and eat it too.

Mike: Yeah. They want God to fix everything, but they don’t want to put their lives in God’s hands. So it’s immaturity and maturity. Immaturity is “fix it.” Maturity is “God, help me to face this; help me to walk through this.” Our response in the midst of difficulty is pressing into God. And so those are a few background thoughts as we get into what we’re talking about today.

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A couple of other background thoughts: some words in Scripture; the word *therefore*. And the word *therefore*, what is it—

David Wessel: There for?

Mike: There for; I knew somebody would say it. (*Laughter*) All right, the word *therefore*; what’s it there for? You’re going through Scripture and you see the word *therefore*. It should cause you to look back and think about this. Before I go any further, it says “*therefore*.” And I have to think, well what did he say just before that? Let me make sure that I grasp that before I take one more verse and keep going. What is it there for? It’s a transition into a reason.

So you think of “*therefore*” in Hebrews 12. “*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses.*” So that’s what it’s talking about; we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses. “*Let us throw off every sin that hinders,*” and run the race. There’s a *therefore*.

Another term is “*since then*.” In Colossians 3, “*Since then you have died with Christ,*” and then it goes on: “*Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*” *Since then* is a statement that again you look at and you say, “What are we looking at here exactly?”, and we dig in.

Okay. A new term that I’ve discovered that I’m going to call our attention to today is not a new term. Obviously it’s been around for a long time; it’s all over the Bible. But it is “*so that*.” The “*so that’s*”; we’re going to look at some of the “*so that’s*” today. And we’re going to look at it, going through John 13-16. John 13-17 is all Jesus speaking, and then He goes to the cross at the end of 17. We know that John 17 is what we call “the High Priestly prayer of Jesus.” And so we know He’s praying for us. He’s praying for the disciples then and for us and what that’s going to look like. It’s a great study and a great read. And John 13-16 is where we’re going to pull out some “*so that’s*.” There are a whole lot of “*so that’s*” all over the Bible. But I decided just to go with that section, and we’re going to look at some of them.

So right now let’s go to John 13, verses 18 and 19; we’re going to take a look at that for a moment. In John 13, verses 18 and 19, the context is that Judas is soon to betray Jesus. And the context is that they’re all together. And Jesus had just washed the disciples’ feet. And He is together with all the guys there. And I’m using the NIV by the way because it is consistent with the “*so that’s*” all the way through. (*Laughter*) So on your paper that you have in front of you that’s the NIV.

Anyway, verse 18. “*I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the passage of Scripture: ‘He who shared My bread has turned against Me.’*” So Jesus is quoting the Old Testament here. “*I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am.*”

All right. In the NIV it says “*so that*.” Yours might say it just a hair differently, but it’s going to be the same idea. “*I am telling you this before it happens.*” So when Jesus says, “*I am telling you this before it happens, so that,*” again that is something that should grab our attention. Why is He saying, “*So that?*”

And what it says afterwards is, “*so that when it happens you will believe that I am who I am.*” Of course “*I Am Who I Am*” is a statement that goes all the way back to Moses and God speaking at the burning bush, right? “*Tell them that I Am sent you.*”

And so we go back to there. And we could have a whole message on each one of these. We could spend about five weeks on just what I’m going to talk about this morning. But my goal is not to try to give you every single detail. My goal is to stir you

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to go back and to begin to think about these things, and in your own heart and in your own quiet time to begin to really dig into these things because of the strength, because of the incredible words that Jesus spoke at the end of His ministry as He was going out the door. These were some of His last words before He was crucified. Yes, sir?

David Miller: I was thinking when you were talking about this, and so I wanted you to know. I saw your notes sheet here, and one of the purposes of prophecy is for God to give us something tangible to grab onto. Well an atheist can't really grab onto prophecy. So he has to invent ways to make it go away. “Oh, prophecy was written after the fact.”

Mike: Right.

David: But prophecy was written.

Mike: Yep, that's right. And Jesus is quoting prophecy here.

David: And He was prophesying.

Mike: And He was; that's right. “I'll tell you this so that,” because He knew what was coming. So He's talking about Judas. And He says to the disciples, “I'm telling you this so that when this does happen, you'll know, You'll believe that I am who I am.” In the Gospel of John, give or take about 85 times, the word *believe* is used—just the word *believe*—about 85 times in the Gospel of John. And so here is one of them right here. “I tell you this so that when it does happen, You'll believe.”

So here's Judas. Here's the group with Judas in their midst. He gets up and leaves. But He's saying, “I tell you this so that you believe that I am who I am.”

Guys, when we talk about belief, it's interesting. All the way at the end we're going to hit this in chapter 16. At the end of 16, just before the High Priestly prayer, He says, “Do you believe?” And we see that one of the guys says, “Now we believe.” Well, were they unbelievers up till then? “Now we believe.” We'll get into that in just a few minutes. But whenever we look at this, think about what causes you to believe. Jesus said, “*I tell you this before it happens so that you will believe.*”

Going down to the next one here we're going to jump over to chapter 14 and verse 29. And what we're going to read here is that we're actually going to read 14:28 and 29. Does somebody want to read that for me: John 14:28 and 29, please?

Don Rimbey: “*You have heard Me say, ‘I am going away, and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that, when it does happen, you will believe.*”

Mike: All right. So again, here He's telling them: “I'm going to be going away. I'm telling you this now so that when it happens you will believe.”

Guys, as we think about what it takes in my heart and what it takes in your heart to begin to really grasp these things, we're realizing here that Jesus is strengthening His disciples. He's giving them a crash course in building their faith. Life brings us through a crash course as we deal with problems. We make decisions all the time as to what we're going to hold on to and what we're not going to hold on to. We make decisions all the time about what we're going to step into, what we say we believe. How does that affect our actions? And so He's telling them ahead of time so they will believe.

You know, as we think about Jesus leaving, previous to right here and what we just read in 28 and 29, I'm going to just read a couple passages; stick with me here. Look at chapter 14 previous to this, in verse 15. “*If you love Me, keep My commands. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.*”

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Look at verse 21. *“Whoever has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love them and show Myself to them.”*

Verse 23: *“Jesus replied, ‘Anyone who loves Me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and We will come to them and make Our home with them. Anyone who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own; they belong to the Father who sent Me. All this I have spoken while I was still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things, and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.’”* Do not fear, right? Yes, sir?

David Miller: In verse 21 here’s another revelation of that; it’s very moving. He says, “I will reveal Myself to you because you are believing in Me and abiding in My commandments.” Jesus doesn’t reveal Himself to the atheist because the atheist can’t receive it. If he did receive it he would be forced to—

Mike: He’d embrace it if he could receive it, yes. And so as we think here, Jesus is telling them, “I’m going to leave,” right? But He has now promised the Holy Spirit. He has promised, “I’m going to go.” And He even tells them in our reading here that “you should be happy; you should be glad that I’m leaving.”

Did you ever think about it in that way? A lot of times different Christians say, “Boy, I wish Jesus was here. We could see Him and we could walk with Him.” And here’s Jesus saying to the guys, “You should be glad that I’m leaving. You should be glad that I’m going, because the Holy Spirit is coming.” They walked with Jesus beside them; they walked beside Him. But the Holy Spirit lives in me and in you. God is not walking beside me; He’s in me, all right? He’s impacting the way we walk and live. And so He’s telling them, “It’s a good thing that I’m leaving.” Again He said, “I’m telling you that I’m going to leave, so that when it does happen, you’ll believe.”

So He’s kind of setting them up so that they’re going to have incredible faith by the end of this process. And yet we see them, and what do they do? They run. When the soldiers come, boom! They run and they hide, and they go every which way. And we’ll get to that some more in a minute. But they split because they still aren’t grasping all this. They still haven’t really grasped and are not really yet grasping who Jesus is. And He’s telling them all these things.

So are you happy that Jesus is gone and that the Holy Spirit is in you? Are you realizing that the impact of God in you is incredible as we walk through this life? And so He’s saying there in John 14 “Do not fear. In this world you are going to have trouble.”

We have trouble in this world; we see it everywhere. And people are collapsing. People have depression; all kinds of anxieties are taking over people like crazy, because one of the big issues is that they’re not grasping the reality, like the guy I was talking to last night. He said, “Mike, the world is going to hell; it’s going to hell!” And he was saying these things to me. Yet on the other side he’s walked away from God.

And he said, “What is God doing? It can’t be like this.” He said, “I’m afraid the rapture is going to come and I’m not going to be there; I’m not going to be in.” And so he—this guy last night--has all these thoughts running through his mind. It’s amazing. Yes, Michael?

Michael Rush: Thank you for this by the way. I love how in these passages He goes through these: “I tell you these things that.” For example, at the beginning of 14 He says,

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“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you.” And this: *“I tell you these things so that when they take place You will believe.”* So He always juxtaposes it to the ruler of this world.

Mike: He juxtaposes it to the ruler of this world, yes.

Michael: Who we know is the evil one, the enemy, the prince of the power of the air. It’s always truth juxtaposed to error and lies.

Mike: In 14:31 there’s another “so that” that I’m not going to go over. But it’s exactly what you’re talking about.

Michael: Right.

Mike: Yes, it’s the prince of this world.

Michael: Which is an important thing to always remember. When we are sharing the message of the cross there’s a clear distinction between truth and error. A lot of times when we talk about people believing, people believe everything these days. It’s important for us to make a clear distinction that there is absolute truth. And anything apart from this is sin; it’s lies, it’s deception; it’s the world system. And so I just wanted to say that.

Mike: Yeah. Thank you. Another thing I just heard recently was that a guy told me that there are about 200 churches a week collapsing in the United States of America right now, shutting down and closing their doors. Whether that’s the exact number I don’t know. But somebody just told me about that. We know there are a lot; whether it’s 200 a week I don’t know. But there are a lot of churches closing their doors week to week, month to month, year to year across this country, because they just die off. They get to the point where they can’t keep going anymore, and they just close up their doors and walk away. Church buildings are then turned into bars or turned into houses or turned into whatever. The devil is happy; he has accomplished his task in this regard.

And this gentleman when he was telling me about this said, “We have to do something about this.” And I said to him, “Well you know, the problem isn’t that.”

He said, “We need to go into these little churches and strengthen them.” The problem is not so much that we can go in and strengthen them. They are rejecting the gospel of God, many of them.

Michael: That’s right.

Mike: Many of them no longer hold to the Bible as the word of God, and they have become social clubs. You know what I’m talking about; they’ve become social clubs. And they don’t want to hear the truth. And they’ve hired a pastor to tell them what their itching ears want to hear, which is what 1 Timothy 4:4 says.

And so we’ve got to realize in our own churches—the ones that you’re a part of, the one that I’m a part of—we need to strengthen where we’re at. And we need to move forward as best as we’re able to keep error out and to keep truth moving forward, and to be those kinds of guys that are listening to the “so that’s,” as Jesus tells them, “So that you’ll believe when it happens.” Yes?

David Miller: I just saw on the news that the Church of England is seriously discussing whether to recognize gay marriage.

Ted and Don Maurer: They’ve already done it.

Ted: It’s already been done, yeah.

David: They’ve accepted gay marriage.

Ted: All the mainline denominations have. It’s not a big surprise.

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Mike: Yeah. With the mainline denominations across the board we’re seeing that. I’m not going to say every denomination. But I’m going to say that the majority by far have gone this route.

Don Bishop: There’s a big split in the Methodist Church over that.

Mike: Yes, the Methodist Church is full bore into it.

Don: There’s a split with the people who don’t believe that; they’re starting their own church.

Mike: Yeah. So let’s kind of bring us back here to the Scripture. I’ll be using some points as we look at what’s going on around us that we’re a part of. Whether you want to be a part of it or not, you’re here. You’re in the mix as a believer in Christ.

All right, so as we think about application here, believe that the Holy Spirit is in you. It’s better than Jesus still being here. What Jesus did for us is amazing. And He accomplished His purpose, and He is sitting at the right hand of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is here with us, living inside of us.

And so take heart with that. Don’t say, “Oh man, I just really wish Jesus was here.” Well, it would be nice to hang out with Jesus, right? And we’ll get to do that someday; we’ll have the opportunity. But right now we’ve got a job to do that He’s called us to do.

So next let’s look at chapter 15, and we’re going to go to verses 9-12. Would somebody read 9-12 of chapter 15, please?

Gary Dunbar: *“As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy will be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (ESV)*

Mike: Yeah; so that your joy may be full. And so again we’re seeing here that Jesus is saying, “I’ve told you this.” So what has He told us? What did He tell us? What’s the context before the so that? What’s the “so that” on this one, the context of it?

Don Bishop: “Abide in Me,” abiding in Him.

Mike: Yep; abiding in Him, remaining in Him, camping out with Him. That’s the context; that’s the idea behind that: abide or remain, depending on your version. It’s “to camp out with, to live with, to be with.” It’s relationship oriented.

When you were 18 years old and your girlfriend said, “Hey, I just want to be with you,” you went “Whew!” Okay. That’s a win! And Jesus says, “I just want to be with you!” Do you get excited about that, that the God of all creation wants to be with you? He wants that relationship. He said, “Abide with me so that My joy may be in you and so that your joy might be complete.”

There are a lot of miserable men walking around this earth. At about age 45 I see the switch flip in men; at about age 45 you can see it. And guys begin to get miserable and old and crotchety, and nobody wants to be around them. And they get lonely. What’s that?

Gary Dunbar: Especially my wife. *(Laughter)*

Mike: Especially your wife! *(Laughter)* But imagine, guys! Imagine at whatever age we are, having the joy of the Lord in you. And your joy has been made complete, and you walk around in that joy. In context here that only comes by abiding in that relationship with God. You can fake it. They tell you, “Fake it till you make it,” right? We can fake it, but we can’t have that joy. We know that we’re hurting inside. Yes, Michael?

Michael: When you brought that up, it reminded me that years ago I heard something kind of humorous that Dr. J. Vernon McGee said. He was talking about how he had fruit trees on his property. He was talking about all these fruit trees he had with the voice he

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had. (*Michael imitates him*) And he said, “One night I looked out the window. And friend, those branches were still on the tree. They weren’t running around by themselves, doing whatever they wanted to do.” (*Laughter*) “Just because nobody was looking. But they were still abiding in the vine.” (*Laughter*) And I’ll always remember that because I thought that was just—

Mike: And I can just hear him say it. You did a good rendition. (*Laughter*)

Michael: I thought that was just such a beautiful reminder to us that abiding just doesn’t take place when people are around, or when we’re in fellowship with other believers. The true believer abides in the Vine.

Mike: Yeah. Yes, exactly. So application: think about this guys; application. Write this down: *Christianity is supernatural*. It’s not just another gig that we’re going through in life. Check: I went to church. Check: I helped an old lady across the street. I’m a pretty good guy; I’m doing fine. That’s not Christianity. In its purest form Christianity is a relationship: abiding with the living God. That’s the application for this passage. “*So that My joy will be in you, and that your joy will be complete.*” (*NIV*) Think about that. Christianity is supernatural. Press into Christ and you will have joy. Kirk?

Kirk Ellerbusch: I think that the idea of abiding kind of needs to be defined a little bit. And I’m certain that I could go into great depth and that there can be more added. But you know, walking with Christ means that whether you’re on a mountaintop experience or you’re in the desert, you’re abiding. You’re keeping His commandments; you’re faithful to Him. You may think that the world is falling apart around you. But you can still have His joy in those times because He abides in you and you abide in Him.

Mike: Yes.

Kirk: So I think we just need to define the fact that it isn’t just a mountaintop experience. That’s being pushed in many churches today. But you can be low and still have great joy.

Mike: But to have a mountaintop experience you first have to climb the mountain, okay? Pressing into Christ as you’re climbing that mountain through those low points and through those steep points and those hard points as you climb that mountain, as we spend that time with Him, talking with Him, you hear that you should have a morning devotion.

A couple days ago my wife said to me, as we got up in the morning, “Word before world.” I said, “What?”

She said, “Word before world.”

I said, “Explain what you’re thinking.” I don’t assume anything with my wife. (*Laughter*) “Explain what you’re thinking here.”

She said, “Before you pick up any screens, before you turn on the TV, before you do anything, you get the Word into your heart before you face the world.” She says, “Before you do anything else, it’s Word before world.”

I said, “Can I quote you on that?” (*Laughter*)

She said, “Absolutely.” But it’s Word before world, spending time in God’s word—not just studying God’s word because by looking into the Scriptures you think you have eternal life. Jesus told the Pharisees, “*You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that by them you have eternal life.*” But He says, “*Yet you refuse to come to Me to have*” what? “*To have life.*” Gentlemen, if you want to have life, you’ve got to come to the Creator of all the world, of all there is, okay? It’s not just studying the Scriptures, although that’s important. It’s not just studying the Scriptures; it’s the relationship, as we begin to talk to Him and bear our souls, bear our hearts.

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We’ve got to move on; I’m trying to get through all these chapters. So Christianity is supernatural. Press into Christ. And so we’re going to jump over now and we’re going to read a big one here. We’re going to start with chapter 15 verse 18 to get the full context here: 15:18 to 16:2. Does somebody want to read that for me, please: 15:18 to 16:2?

Ted: *“If the world hates you,”* Is that right? Is that where you want me to start?

Mike: Yes.

Ted: *“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me they will also persecute you; if they keep My word they will also keep yours.*

“But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father. Surely the word that is written in their Law has been fulfilled: ‘They hated Me without a cause.’

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to You from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father,—He will bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

“I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think He is offering service to God.”

Mike: That’s good right there; just stop right there. In “So that” is in 16:1. “I’ve told you this so that you will not fall away.” All right. Jesus said, “You will be hated. If they hated Me they’re going to hate you.”

You know, in the United States of America we’ve had a really good go-round for a long time. It’s been really calm; it’s been really quiet. And as Christians we’ve had an open door to live as we’ve chosen and complete freedom to do so.

We’re watching that door close slowly but surely right now, and actually it seems like it’s getting faster and faster. But we’re watching that door begin to close. And we’re seeing Christians now being censored all over the place. You know, if you start talking to your kid who wants a gender change, and you start talking to your kid and try to talk him or her out of that, did you know that you can have your kid taken away from you? At twelve years old, if your kid wants a gender change and you try to stop that, that’s abuse in today’s world.

Who is it that’s fighting abortion? Who is it that’s fighting this gender confusion crap? Who is it that’s fighting sexual immorality? It’s Christians. In this world, in this country today, you’re becoming the enemy. Let that sink in. You’re becoming the enemy, even though you’re walking in God’s word.

But what does Jesus tell us? He says, “Don’t be surprised at that,” right? Don’t be surprised; it’s going to happen. You’re going to be in trouble here with the enemy as we go through these days. And the days are going to get a lot worse. It’s not bad yet, not even a little bit.

You know, as we go through these things, in 16:1 He says what? He says, *“All of this I have told you so that you will not fall away.”* (NIV) Yes, Michael?

Michael: There’s an important subtlety here.

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Mike: Yep; go for it.

Michael: He says, *“I tell you these things that you might not fall away.”* (NKJV) But to your point, more and more believers are at this point where we just want to get along, like—

Mike: “Can’t we just all get along?” *(Laughter)*

Michael: Rodney King, yeah. We act like any kind of opposition, if we come against anything strongly, we’re not being “Christian,” right? And so the falling away is not as overt as people just turning away from the faith and saying, “I don’t believe in God.” The falling away, what it is, is being weak. It’s being weak to these things, and being “tolerant” to these things, and trying to mix this foolishness that’s going on with Christianity, which is why the church weakens.

Don’t you know that in the house church in China, for example, when they get thrown into jail, when they get persecuted, when they get beaten, do you know that they rejoice? The reason that they rejoice is because “Blessed are you who are persecuted for My name’s sake, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.” That’s why they’re rejoicing, because they believe what the Scriptures say, right?

Mike: They believe what the Scripture says, so they can rejoice in the midst of this.

Michael: Right. Jesus says, *“I tell you these things so that you might not fall away.”* Look, these things are going to happen. Folks aren’t going to like you. You’re going to be hated. You’re going to be thrown out of the synagogues. You’re going to be this and you’re going to be that. And we have too many believers who say, “Well, we don’t want to make waves.” Well, hey!

Mike: Or “Oh well, what can I do?”

Michael: You can’t. They intercept God.

Mike: Yep.

Michael: I’ve got too many people who don’t like me now. I’m not sure what—

Mike: Why not add a few more? *(Laughter)*

Michael: And not just for the sake of people, don’t be a jerk; you know what I mean? But we want to proclaim truth, and the world is not about this message. We need to know that.

Mike: Yes, I like that. The world is not about this message. And so here’s application: Expectations—your expectations—must be based on truth. Expectations must be based on truth. Not what you hope for, not what you like or don’t like, but based on truth. And God’s word is truth, right? And so expectations must be based on truth.

And I’m just going to throw this out there for a second. I don’t want us to get into a big discussion because I want to keep moving. But what I’m going to get into here and just throw out there is that I had a guy I was talking with recently, a Christian guy who had been going to church for years. And he said, “I really have trouble sharing Christ right now because of things in my life. People in my family are really sick; they have various issues. I have a son who died. I’ve got some other things going on. I really can’t share Christ right now because what am I going to say?”

And I said, “What do you mean?”

He said, “Well, as Christians aren’t we supposed to be blessed?”

And I said, “Well, your definition of blessed is really off, okay? Really off.” What’s your definition of blessed after we’ve just read this? Yes, we are blessed. But what is your definition of blessed after we’ve just read that you’re going to be persecuted; they’re

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going to hate you? That’s the truth. So if your definition of blessed is off, you’d better re-think it. I’m not going to go down that road right now; I’ll just throw it out there.

And I’ve sat down now with that guy for about four months, and I’ve been working with him about making sure that his thought processes are right according to Scripture, and not according to what his hope says, so that he can share Christ in the midst of great difficulty. So think about it: What’s your definition of blessed as a Christian? Really quick.

Kirk: Peter said, *“Who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed.”*

Mike: There you go. So these “so that’s” are pretty powerful as we go through them here. The next one is just a couple of verses below: 16:4. I’m just going to hit this one really quick. 16:3 is where we’re going to start. *“They will do such things”—kill you—“because they have not known the Father or Me. I have told you this so that when their time comes, you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you. But now I am going to Him who sent Me. None of you asks me ‘Where are you going?’ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. When He comes He will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin, and righteousness and judgment: about sin because people do not believe in Me, about righteousness because I am going to the Father, where you can see Me no longer, and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”*

So we see there that the context is persecution. The application is that you’ve been warned. Don’t shrink back. Maybe right now you’re saying, “But I didn’t sign up for this.” If you’ve studied the Scripture, this is what it talks about, right? And it’s okay. I’m telling you, it’s okay, because Jesus says, *“Take heart; I have overcome the world.”* We’re on the victory side, guys, in all these things. And as we look at this, He’s saying, “This is going to happen. Go and testify. Talk about Me, okay? Get the word out there; you’re My disciples. Go do it. In the midst of all this, go do it.”

So as we think about that application, you’ve been warned; don’t shrink back. So what does it mean to follow Jesus? What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus Christ? You know, we can talk about the definition of a man. You say, what’s a good definition of a man? And people come up with all kinds of crazy thoughts. Well, he’s a mountain climber. He does this, he does that; he does all these things outside.

But let me say right now that the definition of a Christian man is to rise up in the midst of difficulty and follow the Truth, to follow Christ, living by the truth of God’s word and moving forward, fighting the battle until you can’t fight anymore and you go home to be with Jesus.

David Miller: Be strong and courageous.

Mike: 1 Corinthians 16:13 and 14: *“Be strong and courageous. Be on your guard.”* A great Scripture.

The last one I have here really quick is this. Let’s look at chapter 16, verses 25-33. And I’ll read that one too just for the time here to try to get through. In 16:25 Jesus says: *“Though I have been speaking figuratively, the time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language, but will tell you plainly about My Father. In that day You will ask in My name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.”*

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So this blows this away. Jesus Himself doesn’t ask the Father for anything when we pray, okay? So can you pray to Mary to get Jesus to ask the Father? Jesus says it right here: “I don’t ask the Father for anything; I don’t do this.” What He is saying right here is: “You go straight to the Father through Me.”

Anyway, verse 26: *“In that day you will ask in My name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”*

“Then Jesus’ disciples said, ‘Now You are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that You know all things, and that You do not even need to have anyone ask You questions. This makes us believe that You came from God.’”

Think about that. He’s just ready to go to the cross, and now all of a sudden they’re saying, “This makes us believe!” (*Laughter*) It’s an interesting thought; I’m just throwing it out there. And I don’t know if Jesus was frustrated or not, but in verse 31 it says, *“Jesus replied, ‘Do you now believe? A time is coming, and in fact has come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for My Father is with Me.’”*

And here it is: *“I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*

Guys, in this world we will have trouble. Why did He say, “I have told you this?” So that—

Brave Man: You would believe.

Mike: So that you may have peace, all right? It’s right there. So joy, peace; you won’t fall away, believe. Those are some of the “so that’s,” and by the way there are a lot more “so that’s,” okay? But we’re going to stop here with this one as we wrap it up.

Guys, these are just some things to think about. Take heart; Jesus has overcome, and we’re on the victory side; take heart. And as we think about unity, the High Priestly prayer is next. He wants us to walk together. He wants us to be men walking together for the common purpose of taking His word out to the world, to stand on truth and to be a light in the midst of the darkness, right? We know that’s what He wants us to do.

But we often fail to do that; we shrink back with the little things. “Oh my, I don’t think I’m going to say anything.” And then we come up with a good excuse. But we need to think about being men.

So an application to this. First of all, the context. *“The Father Himself loves you.”* That’s the context there. The application is that *“you will be scattered.”* And as we’re scattered, as we’re challenged in different ways, He’s saying, “Remember that the Father loves you. You will have trouble.” Remember that you are loved and that you will have trouble. And Jesus says, “I’ve got it. Take heart; I’ve got it. Follow Me.”

He told Peter, “You’re going to be led where you don’t want to go. You’re going to die a bad death.” Okay, and then He says, “Follow Me.”

And Peter goes, “But what about John?” (*Laughter*) We’re not saying, “what about anybody here today.” We’re looking at the “so that’s.” And the so that’s are very powerful. So we’re right up there with the “therefores” and the “since thens,” and now we have the “so that’s.”

All right. So if God loves you and He is good, why do bad things happen? That’s a false statement; it’s a wrong statement. God is good. God does love you. God is compassionate. He has laid out the truth to you. Are you ready to embrace the so that’s?

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Are you ready to embrace what He’s saying here in His last moments before He went to the cross, His last days before He went to the cross?

Just food for thought, men. I hope it’s been challenging. I hope you dig in a whole lot more, and that you begin looking for the so that’s as you’re reading through Scripture. Let’s have a word of prayer together.

Lord, I thank You for Your word. I thank You for the truth. I thank You for Your directing our path. I thank You, Lord, that there are no surprises as we read this. There are no surprises; we’ve heard it before. We just don’t like to think about it. But Holy Spirit, I ask that You would help us to process these words right now. I hope and pray that You would help us, that You would stir our hearts to dig deeply into Your word, to be anchored in the truth. But Lord, I ask that You would challenge each of us to dig in even deeper than that, into a personal relationship with You. Yes, we have made the decision to be saved. Yes, we have studied Scripture. But Lord, we need a relationship with You, maybe like we’ve never had before. And Lord, whether we’re here this morning and need to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior for the first time, or whether we’re here this morning to recommit our lives to You and say, “Yes, that’s for me,” I’m not sure. But Holy Spirit, I would ask that You would speak into men’s hearts. Speak into my heart, and prepare us for the days to come. Help us to stand strong, to be courageous, to be watchful, to be on guard, to be those men You have called us to be. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)