

# **DAY 6**

## **II - DISCOURSES AFTER LAST SUPPER**

## II - DISCOURSES AFTER THE LAST SUPPER

When praying on the last supper, we asked Jesus: *what was going through your heart then?* In the discourses after the last supper in John's gospel Jesus pours out what is in his heart and it is most proper for us to *listen* to his heart. It is not likely that Jesus spoke those discourses in one uninterrupted speech as given in John's gospel, it is rather John's strategy in presenting Jesus' teaching and desires. So I would like to group together the Lord's sayings from various parts of chapters 14-17, in order to consider three themes that run through these discourses.

### FIRST THEME: ONE IN ME AND AMONG YOURSELVES

This is such a strong desire in the Lord's heart, that it could be mistaken for an obsession.

**A. ONE IN ME** [15: 4, 15-16; 17: 24]. Union of hearts is a deep desire of all lovers, a desire to be one. From the beginning, *he called twelve to be with him* [Mk. 3: 14]. He prays to the Father *that they may always be where I am*. He tells his disciples: *I am going to prepare a place for you... so you can be with me*. He uses the image of vine and branches: *remain in me*. *As a branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains in the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me*. This image conveys also a personal care for the branches, which includes pruning, but pruning only those branches that bear fruit. Feeling "pruned" at times can be a sign that the vine dresser desires us to be fruitful, even more fruitful. Jesus also conveys to his disciples an affirmation of closeness: *I am calling you friends*.

**B. ONENESS AMONG THE DISCIPLES THEMSELVES** [17: 11, 18-21]. *Keep those you have given me... so that they may be one like us*, an undeniable desire in the Lord's heart more keenly felt as he senses separation. Oneness among his disciples is not just a desire, it is something that Jesus saw as a must for his mission: *As the Father sent me... so I am sending you... May they be one, as you Father are in me and I in you, so that the world may believe that it was you who sent me*. If they are not one, the world will not believe that the Father sent Jesus and, since Jesus is sending them as the Father sent him, the world will not believe that Jesus is sending them.

### SECOND THEME: THE WAY [14: 6; 17: 3]

It was Thomas' remark: *how can we know the way?* that prompted Jesus' affirmation: *I am the way, I am Truth and Life*. Through Isaiah [55: 8] God had already told us that *your ways are not my ways*. God's way is Christ and *listening* to his **words** and **deeds** is following the right way. That is why we are now *listening* to his heart, as he prepares to enter the hardest stretch of The Way, the one we feel most reluctant to walk, even if it is with him. Jesus tells his disciples: *eternal life is this, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent*. Knowing Christ is not the same as knowing **about** Christ. We do not get to know our parents, children or friends by studying them, but by being with them. We get to know Christ by being **with him** [Mk. 3: 14], by becoming familiar with his values, choices and preferences, in order to know The Way. That is why we *listen to him, my beloved Son*.

### THIRD THEME: PEACE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING [14: 27; 15: 20; 16: 22]

*Peace I bequeath you... a peace the world cannot give... You are sad now, but I will see you again... and that joy no one can take away from you.* He also alerts his disciples: *A servant is not greater than his master... they will persecute you.* It may sound strange that the Lord is affirming peace and joy and at the same time alerting the disciples to persecution. Is this the Christ, who at Christmas is proclaimed as Prince of Peace and who nevertheless tells us: *I have not come to bring peace, but the sword* [Mt. 10: 34]? What kind of peace is the Lord bringing and promising? I suspect that we are often tricked by a spontaneous expectation of peace as an absence of tension, as unperturbed stability, and this may well be one form of peace, a static and passive peace that could be applied to a piece of furniture not experiencing any tension. But a “dead” piece of furniture would not take us anywhere. A well-tuned car engine purrs “peacefully” in the midst of balanced powerful forces. It is the dynamic peace of a balanced tension. There will always be in us two opposite pulls, one toward self and away from God and one toward God and away from self, and we need the dynamic peace of balance between these two pulls, not a static peace of no tension. If at some point there is no tension in our spiritual living, it will be because one of the pulls has ceased to be operative and we know that the pull toward self will never be inoperative, so an absence of tension reveals an inactive pull toward God. Prayer and intentional spiritual living are not meant to eliminate tension, but to keep it alive and this is *a peace that the world cannot give.* The Lord does not bequeath us a static peace of no tension, but the dynamic peace of a balanced tension.

## **REFERENCE SCRIPTURE PASSAGES**

### **DISCOURSES AFTER LAST SUPPER**

**[excerpts from Jn. 14-17]**

#### **ONE IN ME AND AMONG THEMSELVES**

Father, I want those you have given me to be where I am, that they may always see my glory [17: 24]

Remain in me, as I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. [15: 4]

You did not choose me. No, I chose you. [15: 16]

I call you friends... because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. [15: 5]

Keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us [17: 11]

As you, Father, sent me... so I am sending them... May they all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so that the world may believe that it was you who sent me. [17: 18-21]

#### **THE WAY**

I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father, except through me. [14: 6]

Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. [17: 3]

#### **PEACE AMIDST SUFFERING**

Peace I bequeath you... a peace which the world cannot give. [14: 27]

You are sad now, but I shall see you again... and that joy no one shall take from you. [16: 22]

You will be weeping and wailing... but your sorrow will turn to joy. A woman in childbirth suffers... but she forgets her suffering in her joy... [16: 20-21]

Do not let your hearts be troubled... I am going to prepare a place for you. [14: 1]

...because you do not belong to the world... that is why the world hates you. [15: 19]

...the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world. [17: 14]

A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too. [15: 20]