

Threefold Spirit

John 14:15-31

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our

home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here."

One of the most famous works to emerge from the Protestant Reformation was less like a book and more like a transcription of podcasts. Everyone refers to it simply as *Table Talk*—and the "talker"? Martin Luther.

The life of a seminary professor in the sixteenth century differed in many respects from today. Professor Luther and his wife, Katie, "took in" students, perhaps a dozen at a time. At meal-times, a relaxed Luther—but still ever the teacher—would express

his views freely (a little too freely at times!) on a seemingly endless supply of topics. His students, as students do, found ways of recording his comments for posterity.

John 13–17 is Jesus' table talk to His eleven faithful disciples on the evening of His passion. What He said was permanently lodged in John's memory. At this stage in John's account of the evening, Jesus has just said that He is the way—indeed, the only way—to the Father. He had reassured the disciples that He was going to the Father to prepare a place for them. They should therefore not allow their hearts to be overwhelmed by their present circumstances.

Despite this, the disciples' mood is somber: their Master is about to leave them.

Later, Jesus will tell them directly that His leaving them is to their "advantage." And He will explain why. Unless He leaves them, "the Helper will not come to you" (16:7).

These later words probably struck Jesus' disciples as cold comfort. It was inconceivable to them that there could be any adequate compensation for His leaving them, never mind an "advantage." They would need an entire paradigm shift in their thinking to be able to take that in. Even after He has told them, they will still have things to learn that they cannot now "bear" (16:12). But the truth is they could scarcely bear what Jesus was telling them now, never mind what they would learn in the future.

Paradigm Shift

Knowing this, our Lord shows the patience and wisdom that are hallmarks of His ministry as His disciples' Teacher. Here, before He tells them directly that His leaving will be to their "advantage," He prepares the way by talking to them about the coming of the Spirit.

The Scots have a saying: "Some things are better felt than told" (we only begin to appreciate some things when we experience them ourselves). Otherwise, we are describing scenes to people without sight, or aromas to people with no sense of smell.

So, here in John 14:15–31, Jesus is laying the groundwork for what He will later tell His disciples. He is going to leave them. He needs to leave them for their own sake; otherwise, the Helper, the Holy Spirit, will not come to them. If He leaves, He will send Him to them.

Do you think the Master's using the word "advantage" would have set their minds at rest? Hardly. All the disciples would "hear" would be the word "leave." Nothing could compensate for His absence. In their eyes, the presence of the Helper would be poor and inadequate compensation for the absence of Jesus. They do not, indeed they cannot, understand that the Spirit will come to them as the Spirit of Jesus. They cannot yet grasp what it means that they will be indwelt by one and the same Spirit who was present with their Lord throughout the thirty-three years of His ministry. Instead of losing Him, they will gain Him in a new and more intimate way! But until they understand who the Spirit is, the idea that Jesus' departure could be in any way advantageous to them would remain utterly inconceivable.

We can appreciate how they must have felt. After all—Which would you rather have?

1. Jesus with you in the flesh, so that you could hear His voice, see His face, tell the color of His eyes, watch His gesticulations and His facial mannerisms—everything about Him.

Or:

2. The Holy Spirit with you.

Wouldn't you choose Jesus?

If so, you can understand how impossible it was for the Apostles to think of Jesus' departure and the Spirit's coming as an "advantage." They were incapable of that kind of calculation. So, what Jesus now teaches them is intended to prepare the ground for the new paradigm that will restructure their thinking.

Helper

Jesus promises the Apostles that they will receive help: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:16–17).

The words "another Helper" translate the Greek *allos paraklētos*. The root meaning of *paraklētos* is "someone called [*klētos*] alongside [*para*]" to help, encourage, and counsel.

In English, the word "another" can have two different nuances: (1) "another of the same kind" (as in, "That was a delicious chocolate chip cookie; may I have another?") and (2) "another of a different kind" (as in, "I am allergic to the nuts in these cookies; do you have another one—perhaps a plain one?").

In Greek, however, there are two different words for "another": *allos* (= another of the same kind) and *heteros* (= another of a different kind, as in Galatians 1:6).

In all languages, over time words can lose their distinctive

nuances and be used in looser ways than their dictionary definitions (and sometimes even develop new meanings). That seems to have been true of *allos* and *heteros*. But here, clearly, the formal distinction is maintained. When Jesus says He is going to send *allos paraklētos*, He means "another Helper of the same kind as the Helper you have already known and experienced." That original Helper was Jesus Himself. He is saying: "I am going to send a Helper of the same kind as I have been."

But then He adds something remarkable: this "other" Paraclete will not only be with them (as Jesus has been); He will dwell in them and be with them forever!

As readers of John's gospel, we know more about what will happen than the disciples did at this stage. We know from the rest of the New Testament that they are not going to lose Jesus' presence but gain it in a new and more intimate way. For the coming of the Helper will be not only like Jesus' living with them but having Him living in them—forever!

Our Lord spells this out for them. As they continue to walk in loving obedience to Him, God's purposes will unfold. They fear they will be orphaned. But the reverse will be the case, for now they will taste the love of both the Father and the Son (14:21, 23). Rather than being deprived of the ministry that Jesus has exercised among them, they will experience that ministry forever. If they only realized what was happening, they would have been rejoicing rather than fearing (vv. 27–28).

Who then is this *allos paraklētos* who comes as the Helper of the disciples?

Woven into John 14:15–31 are three pictures of His ministry.

Counselor

The Spirit will come as their Helper in the sense that He would be their Counselor, someone they could call on to encourage them and give them counsel.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus had been the disciples' Counselor. He was still counseling them in the upper room. He had counseled them not to be troubled; He had answered their questions, leading them gently from misunderstanding to understanding. Now He promises that the Spirit will assume and continue that role in their lives.

But the word *paraklētos* has undertones that may not be immediately obvious to us. It is used five times in the New Testament, only by John, and (with one exception) only in these chapters in John's gospel where it refers to the Holy Spirit (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

The one exception is significant because it helps us catch a special nuance in John's use of the word. He writes in his first letter: "But if anyone does sin, we have [a *paraklētos*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).¹

The Christian has two Paracletes—the Spirit of God dwelling within him and the Son of God at the right hand of the Father! Paul uses different language to say the same thing: the indwelling Spirit makes intercession for the saints, and the Lord Jesus also intercedes for them at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:26, 34).

Almost without exception, English versions of the Bible translate *paraklētos* in 1 John 2:1 as "advocate." That word has a legal undertone—the *paraklētos* is our Helper, Encourager, Comforter, and Counselor because He serves as our advocate.

Think of the words you may have seen on a letterhead from a law office: "counselor-at-law." It is a traditional way of describing a lawyer—someone who is qualified to act on your behalf in matters related to the law, to be your advocate—and if necessary, to plead your case in court and serve as your defense counsel.

Jesus had fulfilled the role of *paraklétos* for the disciples. He had "taken their case" throughout His earthly ministry. He will not forget His brief when He goes to the right hand of God. But He knows His disciples will still require an Advocate on earth; they will need encouragement and wise counsel; they will need to know how to live faithful Christian lives. Who will give this when Jesus leaves? Jesus reassures them that the Spirit will continue the ministry He began.

There is, however, an important difference between the world of the counselor-at-law today and his or her counterpart in the world to which Jesus belonged.

If someone needs legal counsel today, he goes downtown to an office with a sign outside, often with two, three, or more names on it. You already know that even the most junior lawyers have been taught how to bill by hourly or even five-minute intervals, so you are expecting a significant financial commitment! The law is a profession: the rules, the standards, and the scale of fees are all set out somewhere in writing.

When we read the references to "lawyers" in the Gospels, we might mistake them for first-century equivalents. But "lawyer" in the Gospels really means "law-scholar," not "advocate in court." That is why the lawyers mentioned in the Gospels liked to discuss the meaning of the laws of Moses and to ask Jesus questions of interpretation, such as: "If I am to love my neighbor,

what is the definition of 'neighbor?'" Or "which is the greatest commandment?"

Lawyers were, therefore, interpreters of the law, not men who defended you when you were in trouble. A lawyer was not a *paraklétos*. If you needed somebody to speak up for you before the judges, a *paraklétos*, you asked a close friend, whose testimony could be trusted because he knew you intimately. You might ask your longest-standing friend: "Will you help me and be my paraclete; will you serve as my counselor? I am in trouble, and I need you to speak for me and defend me." Such a friend could speak up on your behalf in court and say: "Let me tell you the truth. My friend is innocent. Nobody knows him as well as I do. I have known him all his life. You can trust me; believe me!"

This is exactly the case with "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17), first in relationship to Jesus and then to His disciples. He was, truly, Jesus' longest-standing and closest "friend."

Think about it. The Spirit was actively present when the Lord Jesus was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35). He enabled Jesus to grow in wisdom and in favor with God during His early years (Luke 2:52; see Isa. 11:2-3). He was present at His baptism and temptations (Luke 3:22; 4:1). He empowered Him throughout His ministry (Luke 4:14, 18) and as He cast out demons (Matt. 12:28). He was the One through whom Jesus offered Himself up to the Father (Heb. 9:14) and by whose power He was raised from the dead (Rom. 1:4). He accompanied Him from the womb to the tomb.

The Spirit was Jesus' Counselor. He bore witness to Him. He was with Him through every step of His life; He knew Him best. We might indeed say that He was our Lord's "Best Friend."

This is why the Holy Spirit's ministry to us is so significant. He knows Jesus best, and He knows us best too. He knows how to teach us about Jesus and what resources to bring to us from Jesus. He is like a bright light shining now on this aspect, now on that aspect of Jesus' character and ministry, showing us that He is exactly the Savior we need.

What an advantage! "I am going from you," Jesus says, "but I will send another Counselor to you, the Spirit of truth." And because He is the Spirit of truth, we can rely on Him absolutely.

It is because of this that we want to love and honor Jesus. Picture the counselor-at-law turning to his client and giving him advice. The Spirit's advice to us is: "Keep your eyes fixed on Christ. See how wonderful He is. Trust Him. Live for Him. Don't let Him down. Follow Him. Serve Him all your life." And because of His ministry, we respond: "Yes, I want to do that. Empower me to do it!" And so, through His ongoing counsel, we keep looking to Christ and loving and serving Him.

But there is another word-picture Jesus uses here to describe the Spirit's ministry. It may be less familiar and expressed in less theological terminology, but it is no less significant.

Homemaker

Jesus had been the disciples' Counselor. Now that role would be continued by the Spirit. But earlier in the evening, as John remembered, Jesus had also described Himself as a Homemaker for the disciples.

If a wife and mother who is not employed outside the home fills in a form that has a line for "Occupation," she writes "Homemaker." It is a much happier description than the now

old-fashioned "Housewife." That described a location ("house") and a relationship ("wife"). But it did not in itself describe what a person did, her occupation. "Homemaker" does. It describes someone who, in a hundred different ways, is occupied as the person who transforms a house into a home and the person who creates the family atmosphere.

Now, think of a situation—after a church service, for example—when a mother says to the rest of the family, "We have guests coming; I will go home just now, before the rest of you, to get everything ready for them."

That is the role Jesus tells the disciples He will fulfill for them! He is their Homemaker: "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2).

The disciples believe that Jesus is leaving far too early! But Jesus teaches them the reason for His departure: He is going to be their Homemaker in heaven.

We can well understand if the disciples thought that this was all very well for the there-and-then; but what about the here-and-now? But Jesus gives them good news: the Spirit will come to be their Homemaker here and now to get them ready for there and then!

See what this means for them—and for us: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (14:18). Since their Homemaker was leaving, they inevitably felt that they were being orphaned. But no, the Spirit would come. How, then, would His coming relieve them of this terrible sense of being orphaned? Because, despite all their faults, they genuinely loved Jesus, and the coming of the Spirit would realize His promise to them: "If anyone loves

me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we [that is, the Father and the Son]² will come to him and make our home with him" (14:23).

Here is one of Scripture's most moving pictures of the Spirit's ministry. Jesus will send Him to them so that they will become men in whose lives the Father and the Son will feel at home!

It is a simple domestic picture. "There is nowhere like home," we say. But sometimes we find ourselves in homes where a cold or awkward atmosphere prevails, and we do not feel really welcome. We are relieved when it is time to leave. Other homes are suffused with an atmosphere of love, and their open-hearted welcome embraces us. It says, "Make yourself at home." And we do. We are so much at home that we scarcely notice the passage of time.

This is what the Spirit's ministry is like. He not only enables us to feel at home with God (we will not feel orphaned) but transforms us so that we become men and women about whom the Father might say to the Son, "I feel at home there, don't You?"

But there is also a challenge implied here. This does not happen automatically, as Jesus explains when He answers Judas' question about why He would show Himself to the disciples but not to the world.³ He comes to, and He and the Father make Their home with, only those who trust, love, and obey Him (14:21, 23).

Is that you?

This picture of the Spirit's ministry as "homemaker" suggests two further reflections.

First, it helps explain why the Christian life is full of challenges. After all, the Spirit is transforming us into a home fit for the Father and Son to live in comfortably! There is major

reconstruction to be done and regular spring cleaning. As C.S. Lewis graphically expressed it:

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.⁴

But, second, there is an appropriateness in thinking about the Holy Spirit as Homemaker.

In the Western world, if a woman who is not employed outside the family home answers the question "What do you do?" by saying, "I am a homemaker," she may sometimes feel demeaned by the response she receives, such as "Oh, so you don't do anything" or "You don't do anything else." The implication is often this: you are not worth much if that is all you do.

Three cheers, then, for Jesus, for using this picture to describe His "Best Friend"! Like a homemaker, the Spirit does not draw attention to Himself. His passion is not to glorify Himself but Jesus (16:14) and to transform lives for the Father and the Son

to indwell with comfort. In every loving family, the homemaker is well known and much loved, even adored—because she is the one on whom the happiness of the home depends. True, the Spirit glorifies not Himself but Jesus. But that is another reason to honor Him for His ministry. No wonder the church fathers who composed the Nicene Creed in AD 325 confessed that “with the Father and the Son he is to be worshiped and glorified”!

So, the ministry of Christ as Advocate and Homemaker would be continued by the Spirit. And, significantly, so would a third dimension of the Master’s work.

Teacher

Jesus Himself had been the disciples’ Teacher. Even in the upper room, He had been teaching them. He had patiently answered their questions, helping them understand what He said. They called him Teacher, and He accepted that description (John 13:13).

Now, however, they are losing their teacher. But once again, Jesus reassures them that they will continue to be taught—because they still have much to learn (13:7; 16:12). When the Paraclete comes, He will also be their Teacher: “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (14:25–26).

But how?

John himself experienced the fulfillment of this promise. His gospel is the result. Not only does it record what was brought to his “remembrance” of what Jesus “said,” but it also includes some of the “all things” the Spirit taught him to see and understand about his Master.

What, then, will the disciples learn?

Paul tells us that the Spirit of God searches “the depths of God” and makes them known to us (1 Cor. 2:10–13). There is nothing about God the eternal Trinity or about the ministry of the Lord Jesus that is hidden from the Spirit. So, says Jesus, when the Holy Spirit comes, “in that day [i.e., Pentecost] you will know that I am in my Father . . .” (John 14:20).

In other words, when the Holy Spirit comes, the disciples will have an even deeper understanding of Jesus’ relationship to His Father and of the intimacy of their fellowship: “In that day you will know that I am in my Father.”

What does the preposition “in” mean?

When Augustine was asked about the meaning of “time,” he replied that he thought he knew until he was asked the question!² Prepositions can be like that. We use the preposition *in* all the time. So, we know perfectly well what it means. But if someone asks us, “What does Jesus mean when He says that the Son is ‘in’ the Father?” we realize that the preposition takes us out of our depth.

Many years later, perhaps remembering that at the table that night he had been “at Jesus’ side [*en tō kolpō*]” (13:23), John penned the first words of his gospel: “The Word was with God [*pros ton theon*—toward God, face-to-face] . . . at the Father’s side [*eis ton kolpon*] . . .” (1:1, 18). Did he see in his own experience of fellowship with Jesus, in knowing he was the disciple “whom Jesus loved,” a reflection of Jesus’ own relationship to His Father as “the Son the Father loved”?

Throughout the gospel, John mentions the ways he had seen this: the glory of the Son in His relationship to the Father; the

ways the Father had shown His love for the Son, and the Son had reciprocated that love (3:35; 10:17). The disciples' eyes had not yet been opened to all this; but Jesus was giving them hints of the privileges that awaited them when the Spirit came.

But if the Spirit will teach them deep things about Jesus' relationship to the Father, He will also teach them deep things about His relationship to them: "In that day," Jesus says, "you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." There is a parallel between the relationship our Lord has with His Father and the relationship the disciples will have with Him. This, too, they will experience when the Paraclete comes.

It is as if Jesus is saying: "Throughout My ministry, I was with you, but always outside of you. You see Me. You can touch Me. You hear Me. But when the Holy Spirit comes as One like Me, He who indwells Me will indwell you. He will live in you and transform and empower you from within."

So long as Jesus is physically present with them, He cannot also dwell in them. He must leave them if He is to dwell in them.

This is an amazing promise. The disciples fear that if Jesus leaves them, their relationship with Him will come to an end. But the reverse is the case. When He leaves and the Spirit comes, they will mutually indwell each other.

The Spirit-given union between the Lord Jesus and His people is one of the great mysteries of the gospel. But it lies at the heart of the Christian life, as Paul points out:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But

if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (Rom. 8:9-11)

To be indwelt by the Spirit is to have Christ Himself dwelling in us and to experience what Paul describes as "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

This helps explain Jesus' enigmatic statement about the Spirit: "You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:17).

Prepositions

The Spirit "dwells with you and will be in you." Jesus' words are often interpreted as His way of describing the difference between believers in the old and new covenant dispensations: the Spirit was (only) *with* believers in the old covenant period, whereas now in the new covenant He is *in* them.

This, however, seems inadequate. It suggests that the Spirit's work under the old covenant was only external. It is true that the Spirit does work externally to fulfill God's purposes, and also that He is the source of all good gifts. But the Apostolic writings teach us that the fruit produced by the Spirit's indwelling believers under the new covenant was already present in the lives of believers under the old covenant. Think how often the New Testament illustrates gospel grace and its fruit by appealing to individuals who lived under the old covenant. It would be strange indeed if

what is effected in the new only by the Spirit's being "in" believers was perfectly capable of being effected in the old by His merely being "with" them. Yes, there is a fullness to the Spirit's ministry when He comes as the Spirit of Christ, but there is, surely, continuity in the way that He relates to believers.

What, then, did Jesus mean? It is more likely that He meant something like this: "You already know the Helper, the Spirit of truth, because He has been present with you, indwelling Me. But when I send Him from the Father, He—the very same Spirit—is going to be present indwelling you. Yes, the same Spirit who these thirty-three years has been present in My life—with all the resources of His presence in My life, holiness, and love—will indwell you."

One and the same Spirit—the identical Spirit—who anointed Jesus indwells all Christians!

Think of it this way: The Holy Spirit indwells Jesus; and now the Holy Spirit indwells His disciples. How many Holy Spirits are there? Two? The Spirit who indwells Jesus and the Spirit who indwells believers?

No, only one.

Or ask the question a different way: Since the Holy Spirit indwells every individual Christian, how many Holy Spirits are there? Hundreds, thousands, millions? A Holy Spirit for each believer?

No, only one.

There is only one Holy Spirit, one Paraclete. All Christians are indwelt by one and the same Spirit—and He is one and the same Spirit who was present in the incarnate life of the Son of God.

We can articulate this theology easily enough. But who can grasp its implications? If there is only one Spirit, then the Spirit the Lord Jesus promised to send to the disciples must be the very same Spirit who indwelt Him. The Spirit Jesus sent to the church after His ascension is the Spirit who for thirty-three years was present in His life. If He indwells us, no deeper intimacy of fellowship with Jesus is possible. And no deeper fellowship with others is possible either. We share one Spirit not only with Christ but with one another!

This is the promise Jesus is giving His disciples. They are "losing" their Teacher only to "gain" Him in a new way.

Later, we will see more about how the Spirit is our Teacher. But for the moment we should note that if He indwells us, He is able to do what all teachers wish they could do for their pupils—get inside them and teach them not only from the outside, by providing "revelation," but from the inside, by giving "illumination." The Paraclete-Teacher sent by Jesus will do precisely this. He is the giver of the revelation of the New Testament and the provider of illumination. He thus enables us to understand the revelation and warms our hearts to receive it. In this sense, the Spirit continues the ministry Jesus exercised on the road to Emmaus: He illumines our understanding and "strangely warms" our hearts (see Luke 24:13-35). In this way, Jesus Himself will come to the obedient disciples and manifest Himself to them (John 14:21).

The Next Stage

As Jesus brings this section of His teaching to a close, He says to the disciples, "Let us go from here" (John 14:31). Many scholars have held that they must have left the room at this point and

perhaps made their way from the upper room to the garden of Gethsemane via the temple. But John gives no indication of this, and he suggests that it was only later that they did so (in 18:1). The words therefore seem a little puzzling.

It may be that the conversation simply continued, as sometimes happens when we have said we are about to leave! But there is another possibility. Jesus has just been talking about the impending attack of the devil. He says, "The ruler of this world is coming." But while Satan may be "ruler of this world," he has no authority over the Lord Jesus: "He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go [*agōmen*] from here" (14:30–31).

The verb John uses here (*agōmen*) was sometimes employed in a military context of troops advancing to meet the enemy ("Up and at them!"). If this is in John's mind, then Jesus is not talking about their immediate physical departure but about His impending conflict; the movement is not geographical but spiritual: "Since the enemy is coming, let us go to meet him."

John knew that "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). The disciples are about to go into the "night" where he reigns. But Jesus is Lord in the darkness of the Jerusalem night as well as in the light of the upper room. And although there will be dark days in the future for the disciples, He has promised to send them "another Helper" who will be with them forever. The last battle has begun, but they will be kept safe.

The True Vine

John 15:1–17

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you