

Series: Receiving life by believing in God's Son (a Gospel of John study)

Sermon Text: John 16:5-15

Key Word: Advantage

(*The accounts in chapters 14-17 are only found in John)

Remaining faithful to Jesus requires lots of upside-down thinking. For instance, we've seen how gospel victory will appear like weakness to the world. We're also to see the cross as a death punch to sin, death, and Satan despite how scary and powerful they continue to feel. This creates a tension for us, doesn't it? Reconciling the victories of the cross and problems of this world is an ongoing effort. On one hand, we might feel faithless to admit our fears, trials, and doubts. On the other hand, some might pretend that the Holy Spirit turns them into Superman or Superwoman, "*faster than a speeding virus, more powerful than a locomotive, and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound.*" The Bible passage before sheds light on this subject as it unpacks the following...

BIG IDEA: Jesus had to go away for His church to gain an advantage.

In *verses 5-6* Jesus said, *But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.* Why weren't the apostles concerned about their Rabbi's destination? The fear of having to suffer had *filled their hearts with sorrow*. How often are we like that? Unable to care--to weep or rejoice with another--because *sorrows* (whatever we deem *more significant*) restrict our vision. The apostles were *asking* the wrong questions. Instead of *asking*, "*Where are you going?*" they either denied it (Peter) or asked, "*How can we know the way?*" (Thomas). Sometimes, fears and assumptions dull our ability to hear truth or ask the right questions. That was true for the apostles, who presumed "*going away*" meant "*going to heaven*", so Jesus dropped a huge hint in *verse 7*, *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I don't go away, the Helper won't come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.* This strange statement raises other questions like, "*How could Him 'going away' be advantageous for anyone?*" or "*Who is this **Helper**, and what's been keeping Him away?*"

You see, Jesus' next stop wasn't "*heaven*", it was "*the cross*" where He'd be glorified, vindicated by resurrection, and return in a few days. His leaving would be *advantageous* by dealing with sin, so the sinless *Helper could be sent to* indwell *His* sinful *followers* (cf. John 7:37-39; 12:23, 28). *Easter changed everything forever!* His death felt like the end, but it was somehow the start of something new. His historic resurrection showed the world who Jesus is, became the foundation upon which to

build our hope, and enabled the *sending* of the Holy Spirit. It is a monumental mistake to present such course-correcting, public events as merely a private, mystical experience.

Obviously, the Holy Spirit is a controversial figure in the church. Speculation over His role ranges from super limited to wildly mystical. As with most debates, truth is somewhere in between. He's no figment of our imagination, nor a genie who grants wishes, nor some personal manifestation who we all experience differently. Like the Father and the Son, *He's a person with certain attributes, who's ministry is specific, not vague*--to proclaim and apply the resurrection's meaning to a broken world. *Verse 8* says, *when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment*. John's storyline helps bring sense to this statement. Up to this point, Jesus has been on the defensive. The religious elite (a.k.a. Temple mafia) represented the general attitude of the world, "We are right, Jesus is wrong." However, Easter decisively proved that "Jesus is right, and the world is wrong." Furthermore, it enabled the Holy Spirit to multiply His effectiveness! Instead of 1 human body, He now indwells and works through multiple people (a.k.a. the church; cf. 14:12).

This means the church is no mere institution--it's a Spirit-filled body through which God *convicts* the *world* in *3 areas: Sin, righteousness, and judgement*. The "*because*" after each word reveals the intent. *Verse 9* says, *concerning sin, because they do not believe in me*. The world redefines sin to suit itself, but what did Easter prove? Jesus is right, the world is wrong! *Verse 10* says, *concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer*. The world sees Christ's death on the cross and says, "See, the guy was an unrighteous fraud who got what He deserved", but again...what did Easter prove? Jesus is right, the world is wrong! His innocence and righteousness were proven by God resurrecting Him. *Verse 11* says, *concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged*. The world put Jesus on the "defensive" and on the cross because they preferred *the ruler of this world* (Satan; cf. John 12:30-33); but what did Easter prove? Jesus is right, the world is wrong! In a grand reversal, Easter vindicated Jesus as the *truly righteous Judge* of the *world*! They attempted to *judge* God's sinless Son, but the cross ended up *judging the ruler of this world* and all his followers. It helps to remember this in the face of their ongoing tricks and empty threats.

Church, as the world draws us into arguments over right and wrong, let's remember Easter already settled such matters! Despite their twisted reasoning the Prophet Isaiah (5:20-21) said, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own

sight!” Of course, this is no license to treat people poorly. The powerful, internal witness needs to be seen for who He is, not for who we were. That was the point when Jesus said stuff like, “*You’ve heard it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven*” (Matthew 5:43-45). The world can’t see God’s character unless His people display it!

Jesus raised one more controversy about the Holy Spirit in *verses 12-15, I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.* Again, speculations about what this means range from super limited to wildly mystical, and our sermon notes contain some seed thoughts for you to chew on. While this statement mostly refers to God inspiring those who wrote the Bible, I also believe the Spirit still speaks to the church. Here’s the catch...*whatever we “think” He is saying now must square with His historic revelation found in Scripture.* That much is clear in 1 Corinthians 12-15. We can’t turn faith into a self-validating, personal experience because it’s rooted in, and nothing without, the public death and resurrection that validated Jesus Christ! All gospel proclamations begin with that story, not our story! Easter was the aim of every apostolic sermon and should therefore be central in ours (cf. Acts 2:23-24; Acts 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 34, 37; 26:8). Whatever you think this text is saying, remember the Spirit was given not to draw others into our personal experiences but to *help* turn us into powerful witnesses of what happened in 33 A.D.

Let’s pray: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...forgive us for not treating each of you with the individual dignity you command and deserve. As chapter 17 will soon reveal, you are 1 God, yet 3 harmonious persons who are always on the same page. As Paul told the Corinthians, interpreting your voice is to be done by your entire church because none of us has authority to claim unique, private visions from the Holy Spirit. Any “*speaking*” and “*gift giving*” your Spirit does for one of us is for the benefit and interpretation of all of us. Terrible things happen when someone claims to have exclusively “*heard from God*.” The antidote to such disease is simple--remembering that the Holy Spirit only points to one man, and His name is Jesus! It is Him we serve, never the vision of a human leader. Help us to heed what the Apostle John said to the Ephesian church in 1 John 4, “*Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*” God help us! Amen.

Let's sing: "ISAIAH 53"

So, what's your NEXT STEP?

- Remember, our next step always begins with faith in Christ. Either placing faith in Him for the first time or exercising faith to repent, change, and grow. Either way, His Spirit will help you.

Quotes related to this passage:

- **Easter changed everything forever:** "So, when the world celebrates 'the end of Jesus' at the tomb because he cannot be seen any longer (16:10b), the disciples can celebrate the true circumstances of his absence: He has been enthroned with the Father. This is the essence of the church's Easter proclamation." Professor Gary Burge
- **The bigger picture:** "After announcing His imminent departure from the earth (John 13:33; 14:1-6), He urged His followers to obey His commandments (14:12-15; 15:1-11), to love one another (15:12-17), and to beware the hostility of the world (15:18-27). While offering these predictions, promises, and commands, Jesus alluded to the coming of the Holy Spirit to teach believers all they would need to know (14:16-17, 26; 15:26). But these passing references could only have been mystifying. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was reserved for kings and prophets, and occasionally for regular folk when the Lord wanted to accomplish something extraordinary. The idea that the Spirit of God would indwell each believer was unthinkable—an unbelievable extravagance of which no one was worthy. Jesus soothed their pain with a wonderful truth. The Lord's physical presence would be replaced by something far superior. Whereas Jesus in the flesh could be in only one place at a time, the Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once. Limited access to the presence of God would give way to continual communion with Him. Far from being abandoned, the disciples would experience the presence of God like never before." Pastor Chuck Swindoll
- **More context:** "Let's summarize what we have seen so far. The world cannot know the Spirit-Paraclete because it does not know or love God (14:15-17). Amidst the hostilities of the world, the Spirit-Paraclete will defend believers, strengthening their witness (15:26-27) and their recollection of the things Jesus has taught (14:26). All of this is defensive. Now in 16:8-11 the Spirit-Paraclete 'passes to the attack.' As if in a court of law, the defender now becomes prosecutor and judge. Note carefully that this is precisely the role of Jesus in the Gospel of John. He who is on trial, who must defend his signs and words, will finally judge his accusers. This happened in chapter 9 when in 9:35-41 Jesus personally came to the aid of the blind man. The Spirit (who theologically becomes Jesus' alter ego) plays the same role." Professor Gary Burge
- **The coming advocate:** "Verses 8-11 speak of the holy spirit, the 'helper' we've already met in the previous chapters, coming as the advocate in a lawsuit, and proving that the world is in the wrong. The difference is that this time God's people in the lawsuit are the followers of Jesus. 'The world' includes of course the pagan nations, but also, insofar as it hasn't believed in Jesus, Israel as well. The earlier verses of the section repeat what's been said before, adding new emphases. The spirit will prove that the world is in the wrong, on the three counts that really matter." Professor NT Wright
- **Sin, righteousness, judgement:** "'Sin' (hamartia) refers to one's inability or unwillingness to do as God commands, resulting in guilt before Him. Jesus died to pay the penalty of sin for the

whole world, but only those who believe in Him have appropriated His sacrifice and, therefore, stand guiltless before the Father. Those who do not believe in Christ remain in their sin and must answer for their choices (16:9). ‘Righteousness’ (dikaïosunē) refers to one’s legal standing before God as ‘not guilty.’ In this context, Jesus relates the issue of righteousness to His ‘going to the Father.’ Throughout His ministry, Jesus claimed oneness with the Father, for which the world (the religious leaders) accused Him of sin, deceit, and blasphemy (5:18; 7:12; 9:16, 24; 10:33). His going to the Father is the ultimate vindication of Christ’s righteousness over that of the world. The Holy Spirit will confront humanity with the righteousness of the Son (16:10). ‘Judgment’ (krisis) refers to one’s life and character being sifted in order to determine one’s moral worth. Jesus stated repeatedly that He did not come for the purpose of judging, but that individuals would reveal themselves by their response to truth incarnate (3:17-18; 5:22-23; 12:48). By virtue of Christ’s vindication, Satan has been sifted and found wanting. The Holy Spirit will confront humanity concerning its choice for Satan instead of the Son (16:11).” Pastor Chuck Swindoll

- **Conviction:** “Specifically, the Spirit will convict the world of guilt (8). The verb literally means ‘to show someone his sin and summon him to repentance’. ‘Expose’ is probably the best single term. The Jewish authorities claimed that executing Jesus would be a ‘righteous’ act. ‘It is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish’ (11:50). It was ‘better’ since it preserved the nation, and with it the temple worship and the sacred law. It was therefore a ‘righteous act’, even ‘offering a service to God’ (2). But all the while, their hearts spoke another language. People claim the right to determine for themselves what will count as sin, what will be their standard of righteousness, and where judgment has, or has not, been properly expressed. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit’s witness, challenges this ethical autonomy, uncovers the rebellion against God which underlies it, and confronts the world with the true character of sin, the true meaning of righteousness and the true place of judgment.” Pastor Bruce Milne
- **Convicting the world through believers:** “In 16:7-8, Jesus said, ‘I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world . . .’ The context of 16:8-11 is the coming of the Holy Spirit ‘to you.’ In other words, the Holy Spirit will confront the world from within believers, through believers. Those who are of the world do not have the Holy Spirit active within them in this way. The child of God living on this earth, empowered by the Spirit of God, is a living letter observed by the world. As the world witnesses the child of God being controlled by the Spirit, the world observes a life undergoing transformation. The world is confronted by the Holy Spirit via His activity in believers.” Pastor Chuck Swindoll
- **When the world judges us:** “The world supposes that it can and should pass judgment on Jesus’ followers. But the events which are about to unfold, the events of Jesus’ death and resurrection, indicate decisively that they are wrong. These events mean that ‘the ruler of this world’ – the dark power that has kept humans and the world enslaved – has been condemned. His power has been broken. Death itself, the weapon of tyrants and particularly of ‘the satan’, is a beaten foe.” Professor NT Wright
- **Remaining sensitive to sin:** “We need to be reminded that the sin of the world should stun us, but it does not. One mission of the church, therefore, is to be the one voice that holds an honest assessment of the world, that speaks of the way it twists the meaning of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and that describes boldly its absence of justice and compassion and its failure to

promote true virtue in the fear of God. The church's testimony should uncover 'true vertical' so that the world can see how it has skewed our reality. Therefore, the mandate of John 16:8–11 is for us—in prayer, guided by the Holy Spirit, listening for the voice of Christ—to identify and diagnose the true nerve-system of this world in our own generation. 'The prince of this world now stands condemned' (16:11b)—which means that the moral and spiritual struggle is not only about sinful humans, but about humans whose communities and organizations, governments and politics have been manipulated by Satan. To diagnose the injustice, say, of racially discriminatory programs becomes spiritual warfare. To unmask the dishonesty or deviousness of political systems that sustain suffering and anguish around the globe or around the corner is spiritual warfare too. Sometimes such activity will be labeled as unpatriotic (when we name political or military evil) or antisocial (when we identify the key players in evil deeds). But true vertical, once seen, demands that all floors be straightened and leveled. If the church talks about the Holy Spirit only in terms of the emotional healing it may bring or the praise and worship it may generate, the church has missed part of the Spirit's work. Charismatic gifts, healings, and signs and wonders are only part of the Spirit's mission. The Spirit is also engaged in the prosecution of the world. The Spirit is likewise about battle and struggle and winning so that the kingdom of God described by Jesus will begin to emerge like a mustard seed, whose shrub stands visibly on the landscape (Matt. 13:31–32)." Professor Gary Burge

- **Easter changed how God deals with us:** "The Spirit accomplishes His mission of believer transformation by bringing divine truth to the minds of His own. Before Scripture had been written, He revealed truth directly to certain people: prophets in the Old Testament, prophets and apostles in the New Testament. Once John, the last living apostle, completed the final written communication from God, the book of Revelation, humanity had received all the divine truth needed to live obediently. Now the Spirit's ministry is to call Scripture to mind, illumine its meaning, couple it with experience, and apply it. We participate in the Holy Spirit's transformation process through the exercise of spiritual disciplines (such as prayer, worship, service, evangelism, etc.)." Pastor Chuck Swindoll
- **Interpreting God's Spirit:** "John is the only Gospel that gives us some idea of the relationship between the Spirit and interpretation. John is fully aware that the deeper meaning of Jesus' words only came once he had been glorified and the apostles had experienced the Holy Spirit. In two places John specifically states that the plain meaning of Jesus' words remained veiled in their original setting and that it was only after Jesus' glorification (with its attendant gift of the Spirit) that true understanding came (2:22; 12:16). This is what Jesus means in 16:25 when he points to a time when plain speech will disclose the exact meaning of his words. Veiled revelation will be gone; clarity of spiritual insight will be an apostolic gift. But this explanation of 16:12–14 is inadequate if it is all we say about the Spirit and revelation. Jesus says that the Spirit will unveil things they have not heard. Such an understanding, of course, has led to countless abuses over the centuries as self-appointed teachers and new-age prophets have laid claim to the Spirit's authority as they unveiled new, unbiblical teachings. These abuses have made modern exegetes understandably cautious about such ongoing revelation, and some of them claim that we are doing nothing more than pressing modern issues of church life on John's ancient text... 'This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not

acknowledge Jesus is not from God' (1 John 4:2–3). This is the same test Jesus outlines in John 16:14–15. The Spirit will glorify Jesus and not depart from what he has revealed already. To refuse to glorify Jesus is to invalidate one's prophetic voice. This word never contradicts the historic word of Jesus and never deflects glory away from Jesus, but it may faithfully bring the church to see its message and mission in a new way...The 'all truth' of 16:13 may be something unexpected, some new frontier (like a modern Gentile Caesarea), or some new work Jesus desires to do in the present time. The task of the church and its leadership is to discern with great care what that work might be. To restrict the Spirit's voice to the work of historic recitation, that is, to the application of the biblical text, is to restrict the Spirit's effort to speak to contemporary issues. It is interesting that in Paul's writing, he lists prophets and teachers in the second and third places of authority after apostles (1 Cor. 12:28). In Acts 13:1 prophets and teachers led the church at Antioch where there were no apostles. The Spirit both equips those who guide the church into the deeper meaning of Scripture (teachers) and those who have a contemporary word, a dynamic word for the church in its world today (prophets)." Professor Gary Burge

- **Much more to say:** In essence this (Spirit's ministry) is a reportorial ministry: he will speak only what he hears. Jesus cannot say everything they need to hear at this point, since they are in no position to receive or grasp it. Later they will be, and the Spirit will share Jesus' words with them...The 'you' of 14:26, as here at 16:13, refers to that special inspiration of the apostles which enabled the composition of the books of the New Testament...The Holy Spirit's ministry as the teacher of his converts today consists essentially in leading them to understand and apply the normative truths of Scripture." Pastor Bruce Milne
- **The Spirit's self-imposed limits:** "But this new revelatory work, this ongoing divine voice of the Spirit, has its limitations. The Spirit is dependent on Jesus for everything he says (16:13). Note the tense of these verbs: The Spirit is not only going to reiterate the things Jesus has said (remembering, 14:26), but he will convey the things that Jesus will say (revelation). The revelation of Jesus will continue in the community and the Spirit-Paraclete will be the authoritative channel through which he is heard. Yet these revelations may not depart from what Jesus uttered in his historic ministry. Historic revelation must always be the measure by which new revelations are tested. Revelations that fail to glorify Jesus (16:14), that fail to recognize Jesus' preeminence and glory, dishonor the Father since it is he who is the source of everything Jesus has (16:15)." Professor Gary Burge
- **Debate over the Spirit's role:** "Evangelicals have traditionally preferred to see this work of the Spirit as closely tied to the development of Scripture and its use. This is in part an exegetical decision that believes that the promises of this section belong not to the church universal but to the apostles only. 'I have much more to say to you' (16:12, italics added) points to Jesus' immediate audience. Hendriksen's well-known commentary on John thus sees this ongoing revelation in 16:12 as fulfilled in the writing of the book of Acts and Paul's letters. But if the Spirit's work goes beyond the production of the Scriptures—that is, if we have here a genuine prophetic gift that provides ongoing revelation—we then have to discern the guidelines and limitations for such revelation. Is this promise (like so many biblical promises) extended to every Christian? I would argue that it is. If so, what are the limits of its use? Calvin, for instance, writing in 1553 on these verses, lapses into nothing short of a tirade here as he outlines the 'wicked abuses' of medieval Catholics, who (in his mind) use the verse

to justify the ‘most stupid and absurd things imaginable.’ Some would argue that the Protestant church in the modern era has been subject to similar abuses.” Professor Gary Burge

- **Being clear about our offer:** “The message of the church is not only about a ‘better product’ or a better life that might entice the unbeliever. The message of the church is also prophetic: It incriminates the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of the world around us. The world lives under the judgment of God; its institutions are infirm and impotent. When the church announces its indictment in the power of the Spirit, there will be trouble.” Professor Gary Burge
- **Seeing Jesus:** “We live with spiritual imperfection and incompleteness, not unlike the disciples as they awaited Easter. Paul’s candid admission is that our vision is opaque, like looking through a dark glass or an ancient mirror (1 Cor. 13:12). We yearn for the day when we will see “face to face” (13:12b) and discover that all our questions have disappeared (John 16:23a) ... For others is the acceptance of struggle and spiritual battle—to acknowledge the world in all its power—a concession that has no place for Christ as victor? Where is the power of God when the power of the world sometimes seems so overwhelming and we feel defeated? ... We must point forward to Christ’s return. That is, the Second Coming serves the church much the same way that the resurrection served the apostles. In theological language, this is tension between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ of the kingdom of God.” Professor Gary Burge

Quotes related to the larger context:

- **Full life:** John said he wrote this letter to help us find “*fullness of life through believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*” Chapters 1-12 contain 3 years of real-life stories where people met Jesus during His public ministry. Chapters 13-21 slow way down as Jesus began to reveal His (God’s) heart to His disciples in the week leading up to the cross and resurrection.
- **The bigger picture:** *Chapters 13-17* form a unit, which is often called His “*Farewell Address.*” **13:1** begins, “*Jesus knew his hour had come to depart out of this world*”, and **17:1** begins, “*Father, the hour has come*”. The middle 3 chapters (**14-16**) are about another Comforter. The bullseye of this unit is the parable of the true vine, making it the central theme of the entire unit (**13-17**) “*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*” (John 15:4). Why such a huge section on comfort and abiding in Christ? Well, because the disciples were becoming uneasy as Jesus ramped up the cryptic talk about His departure and death. Anxiety is evident in their questions (**13:36, 14:5, 8, 22**), and Jesus affirms His purpose for this address in **chapter 16:1**, “*I’ve said all these things to keep you from falling away*”; **16:6**, “*Because I’ve said these things, sorrow has filled your heart*”; **16:25**, “*I’ve said these things in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father*”; and **16:33**, “*I’ve said these things, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*” This unit of Scripture gives the church her marching orders (i.e., *to glorify God by loving one another like Jesus loves us*) and is filled with comfort for when the world wears us down and we lose sight of the goal.
- **Farewell Addresses:** “Academic studies have compared Jesus’ Farewell Discourse with those of dying teachers and leaders in antiquity. Jacob’s last words in Genesis 49 are typical of this form, as is Moses’ farewell in Deuteronomy 31–34. Not only does Moses identify his successor, but he gives teachings that must be recorded and a final blessing. Apocryphal

Jewish literature from Jesus' day offers more tantalizing parallels. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs each of the twelve sons of Jacob give farewell instructions, blessings, and prayers. In the Testament of Moses, we overhear Moses' final words to Israel and Joshua. We even possess 'testaments' of Solomon, Job, Isaac, and Adam³⁰—fictionalized farewells imagined by Jewish authors between 100 B.C. and A.D. 200. Jewish testaments imagine the dying (or departing) person surrounded by his most intimate friends and family. Standard literary elements generally appear. For instance, they always show a concern for the comfort and encouragement of those left behind. Often there is an exhortation to obey the law, and a deposit of writings is left behind.³¹ In some cases, the departing person passes his 'spirit' to his followers or successor. Moses and Elijah do this respectively for Joshua and Elisha (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9; 2 Kings 2:9–14). In the farewell of Jesus many of these elements appear. He encourages his disciples and comforts them (John 14:1). He also urges them to be obedient (13:34; 15:12), and from John's perspective the 'literary deposit' Jesus leaves behind is the Fourth Gospel itself. Moreover, Jesus promises that his Spirit will indwell and empower his followers following his death (14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:3, 13). In other words, we have in John 13–17 all of the elements of a Jewish farewell.” Professor Gary Burge

- **Change of focus in Chapter 13:** “This section signals a change of focus as Jesus turns to ‘his own’ and shows them his love...In the end there is no explanation of the cross other than the love of God. There can be no other, for we certainly do not deserve it and can never earn it.” Pastor Bruce Milne
- **The heart of God:** “Here, in five chapters (13-17), in only 155 verses, and in less than four thousand words we are given what the Puritan writer Thomas Goodwin called “‘a window into Christ’s heart.’” Professor Sinclair Ferguson
- **Book Context:** The Gospel of the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee, provides a clearly stated purpose. *John 20:30-31* says, “*Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*” Some people demand to have all their questions satisfied before bowing to Jesus, yet John claimed his limited account was enough to bring anyone to faith. As we read it, our Savior and friend emerges from the pages as a real person in the real world. Jesus shows us what we could become, if we too would rely on His infinite Father who will gladly supply whatever we need.
- **Life in his name:** Life is the Greek word, “zōē”, which means “Life, Living, Lifetime, Life-Giving” and is where we get the word, “zoology” in English. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says it's “used in the NT of life as a principle, life in the absolute sense, life as God has it, that which the Father has in Himself, and which He gave to the Incarnate Son to have in Himself, Jhn 5:26, and which the Son manifested in the world, 1Jo 1:2. From this life man has become alienated in consequence of the Fall, Eph 4:18, and of this life men become partakers through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jhn 3:15, who becomes its Author to all such as trust in Him, Act 3:15, and who is therefore said to be 'the life' of the believer, Col 3:4, for the life that He gives He maintains, Jhn 6:35, 63. Eternal life is the present actual possession of the believer because of his relationship with Christ, Jhn 5:24; 1Jo 3:14, and that it will one day extend its domain to the sphere of the body is assured by the Resurrection of Christ, 2Cr 5:4; 2Ti 1:10. This life is not merely a principle of power and mobility, however,

for it has moral associations which are inseparable from it, as of holiness and righteousness. Death and sin, life and holiness, are frequently contrasted in the Scriptures.”

Other Articles/Songs/Videos:

Direction for discussion leaders:

1. Keep circling back to the big idea and main points of the passage to stay on track.
2. Keep the discussion around 30mins. Go for a single, not a home run.
3. Keep the group small for deeper sharing. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.
4. Keep these simple questions in your back pocket: What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

Preparation questions for John 16:5-15.

- What questions does this passage raise for you? What does it seem to be saying?

Application questions from John 16:5-15.

- Jesus linked the sending of His Spirit with His physical resurrection. How are these two things connected, and how does this impact how we view the Spirit’s role in our lives and the rest of the world? Specifically, why must the Spirit be more than a private, mystical experience?
- If not Jesus, who and what did the cross really judge? How should this impact debates over things like sin, righteousness, and judgement? As these debate rage, what should be the posture of those who’ve received such undeserved grace? Please share an example to help us process.
- While it’s important to share our testimony of transformation, how might our story get in the way of the gospel? Share how we might inadvertently diminish the historic gospel message by overemphasizing our experiences and diminishing Christ’s experience?

Here are some great resources for digging deeper into community group life...

How life together looks <http://austinstone.org/stories/film/item/140-missional-community-lukes-story>

Rethinking what we do https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvWnXYSELF4&feature=player_embedded

Numerous articles to provoke thought <http://toddengstrom.com/archives/>

What groups of 2-3 might look like <http://toddengstrom.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LTG-Overview.pdf>