

John 14:18–21

18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

19 “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

20 At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

“I Will Not Leave You Fatherless”

John 14:18-21

When we look at this time the disciples spent that last night with Jesus, we often see it in an entirely academic light. We look at the rich theological truths Jesus imparted to them to prepare them for the days of uncertainty ahead and forget the trauma these disciples faced. Can we begin to understand what it meant to know that the person who was the center of their lives for the last three years was going to be taken away? They faced the fact that this kingdom that was so much in their thoughts was not going to readily appear. He had told them all of this already, but they had not understood. Now, suddenly this was becoming real to them.

When we get a grasp on this, we can understand why Jesus said what He did in verses 18-21 and why this was important to His disciples. ***“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”*** There are two parts to this paragraph.

I. His Promise (v. 18-20)

II. Our Response (v.21)

I. His Promise (v. 18-20)

A. When Jesus promised He would not leave them in the desperate condition that orphans and fatherless people lived in, He touched on something we don't understand in this day.

1. Someone who has lost his or her parents was in a difficult place in the culture of the Bible. Let me quote from ISBE on this issue. "The fatherless were one of the oppressed classes in Israelite society, together with the widow and the sojourner. Because the husband and father was the primary legal defender in biblical times the widow and her children often had no one to defend them. Consequently, in every instance in which the fatherless are mentioned the context is one of helplessness."

2. Because of this,

(1) God provides for the widow and fatherless with special legislation in the Law of God. ***"You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless."* Exodus 22:22-24.**

(2) He also made special provision for them in that they were to partake in the special third year tithe.

(3) Finally, He also had special promises for the fatherless. ***"A father of the fatherless, and a defender of widows Is God in His holy habitation."* (Psalm 68:5)**

3. Against this cultural backdrop the Lord Jesus made this promise. He would not leave them without defender, provider, or helper. He Himself will come to them.

B. Now that we understand what being an orphan meant, we need to understand what He meant by the phrase, ***"I will come to you."*** How would Jesus come to them? **Verses 19-20** unpack this idea for us. Our Lord says some significant things here. ***"After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will***

live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

1. The first thing He seems to be referring to here is Resurrection morning. He will die and the world would never see Him again. All of the resurrection appearances were to folks who knew the Lord or would know Him in the future. But He did not show Himself to the world.

2. He will also be gone from their sight for a while. He will die and He will lie in a grave for three days. Then He will rise again and He will show Himself to His disciples. He would indeed come to them. His crucifixion was not the end. It was only the beginning.

3. Because the Lord Jesus rose to die no more, we too one day will also live to die no more. Paul described that day in ***1 Corinthians 15:50-57***. ***“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

C. Because of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, more understanding will come to them about the relationship of the Lord Jesus to the Father and their own relationship with Him. ***“In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”*** (verse 20) The phrase, “in that day,” probably refers to the time after the resurrection when God turns the light on in their heads and hearts and they begin, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, to understand the things Jesus taught them. This alludes to their knowing but not fully

understanding. Do you remember Paul's prayer in *Ephesians 3:14-19*? ***“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”*** In a real sense they were to come to know the unknowable.

II. Our Response (v.21)

A. How are the disciples to respond to this truth? Our Lord gets very practical in *verse 21*. ***“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”*** Here again, the Lord Jesus is not talking about earning our salvation or being somehow worthy of our Lord's love. The Apostle Paul reminds us God loved us when we were still sinners and thus unable to love Him. *Romans 5:6-8* says, ***“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”***

B. Our response to all of this should be a willingness to love and obey our Lord. Our desire to obey Him shows our love for Him and if we obey Him, we will be loved by the Father and the Son and He will be even closer to us.

C. The real point in this passage is that if we do not know the Lord Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we cannot know His love for us. We also cannot be assured that someday we will be with Him!

79 Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee