

For Believers Only

John 13:31-John 17

On an entry door located in the back or the side of a business, there is often a sign marked, "For Employees Only." Immediately inside this door there are workrooms, storage rooms and offices not meant for the general public. The employees know where to go and what to do in order to get the store open or the business day started.

An avid golfer knows that if he wants access to all the privileges of the golf club, he needs to be a member of that club. He can then go through all the doors and gates marked, "For Members Only."

Christianity is not a business, nor is it a club. Christians are part of a family. Christianity is open to all who will believe. It is after you trust Christ as Savior and Lord, though, that His word makes the most sense. Ask any believer who read the Bible before and after His conversion experience. He will tell you how his eyes were opened to the truths of God's word once he became a true believer.

The gospels record many times when Jesus taught His disciples. The settings for these teachings were varied but many were in public places - such as the temple and the mountaintop - where He was not only teaching His disciples, but those who were not believers were in attendance as well. As a result of what they heard, many then became believers. There is one special passage in the gospel of John where there was no one else within earshot except for true believers. John 13:31 through John 17 was for believers only.

The setting for this passage began in the upper room where Jesus had the last supper with His disciples. Jesus entered this room with a troubled spirit. Jesus was truly human. He needed strength to endure what would follow - His betrayal, arrest, trial, scourging and crucifixion. His betrayer entered the room with Him and several times, He made mention of this fact. In spite of that, Jesus washed the feet of all twelve men - including Judas Iscariot. However, after Judas left, the tension He was feeling also left the room. He turned His attention to the eleven men who truly loved Him. His beloved disciple John recorded these precious hours.

When you read this passage as a whole, imagine yourself in this very private setting. If you are a believer, you can do that because Jesus prayed not only for those within His hearing, but also for all those who would believe in Him because of their testimony (John 17:20). That includes everyone who is part of the family of God. These special words "for believers only" are meant for us.

Jesus shared sweet words of comfort, important words of instruction and numerous promises. These men loved Him, but were still confused. Even so, Jesus knew that when the Holy Spirit came upon them after His resurrection and ascension into Heaven, what He had said would then make sense.

Jesus knows we will have times of confusion - not fully understanding what He is doing in our lives or what is in our immediate future. His Holy Spirit enables us to face the uncertainties of life because He is certain. He is trustworthy. He is faithful. He is with us. He has a plan and it is good. He wants our lives to glorify Him.

After Judas left, Jesus told His disciples "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him" (John 13:31). Until John 14:31, they remained in the upper room. Then they left, possibly going for a walk through the vineyards (John 15 and 16). He concluded with His beautiful prayer in John 17.

The promises Jesus made in this passage are for believers. We are part of His family. A heavenly inheritance is ours.

- "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).
- "Where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3).
- You know the way ("the way you know") (John 14:4).

- "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).
- "...he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12).
- "Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).
- "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).
- "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18).
- ..."Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).
- ..."And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21).
- "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" (John 14:23).
- "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 things that I said to you" (John 14:26).
- "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).
- "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).
- "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7).
- "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11).
- "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16).
- "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble" (John 16:1).
- "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).
- "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).
- "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be One as We are" (John 17:10-11).
- "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

Even in times of confusion, Jesus said we know the way - follow Him. We shall never be out of His presence, or away from the leadership or resources of His Spirit. Believers are promised an eternal home with Him, bought and paid for by His blood. As the Father sent Him into the world, He sends us (John 17:18) so that others may also know the truth of His words and become part of His family. Even now, in our troubled world, He assures us of His peace, His love, protection from the evil one, His revelation of spiritual things, His joy, and a certainty that when we follow Him, we shall be one with Him and bring glory to the Father. These things we know because Jesus said so.

"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one" (John 17:22).

What a treasure this special passage is for believers.