

## ***To Bear a Truth***

John 16:12-15 (June 12, 2022)

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<sup>12</sup>“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

### ***Historical Context***

In this passage Jesus continues the farewell speech that extends from 13:31-17:26, with only a few strategic interruptions from the eleven who remained with Jesus after Judas had gone out from the group gathered for the last supper. These four verses are loaded with the vocabulary of speaking and announcing (six times). It is safe to say that Jesus is passionately interested in communication in these verses, more exactly, reliable communication of truth for the sake of guidance (verse 13).

### ***Theme: To Bear a Truth***

In the final section of his Farewell Discourse to the disciples, Jesus focuses further on the role of the Holy Spirit (literally, the Paraclete). Most of what is said in this section repeats themes that have already appeared: the gift of the Spirit to the disciples (church), the Spirit's relation to Jesus, the Spirit being the continuing presence of Jesus, the Spirit of truth reminding the disciples of all Jesus had taught. Now we hear these themes again, but with nuances that take us deeper into their meaning.

What might Jesus mean by the phrase “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now”? We understand that Jesus can't teach them everything he would like because his own time in the flesh is limited, but this saying puts the emphasis on the condition of learning that disciples are yet unprepared for. To bear means to carry, as in a load or weight.

Metaphorically, it is tied to suffering. The disciples were not in a position to understand what Jesus might say to them about some things, since they had not yet experienced the suffering that would be coming for them. Suffering is a teacher. It opens one up to learning that could not be gained without it. The disciples still harbored hopes of Jesus' messianic success that comported with their vision of the reign of God. In that vision, they would join in the prosperity of Jesus' victory over the powers of the world. Only after suffering the loss of such dreams as a result of Jesus' death, their own rejection by religious authorities, and persecution by pagan powers would they be in position to receive what Jesus wanted them to know.

We know this experience ourselves in other ways.. Most if not all of us will experience great failure and a loss of dreams at some point in our lives. The truth about redemption THROUGH suffering is only so much theory until such an experience becomes real and personal. To bear a truth means to receive it as a fact of life that will change you. It is more than information to be processed; it is wisdom to be lived.