



Morningside Church

Sermon Discussion Guide

Title: Exhortation, Expectation, and Explanation

Date: January 25, 2026

Scripture Text: John 15:12-16:4

Notes:

Today we pick back up with our look at the book of John. The time of Jesus' crucifixion is approaching. We pick up in chapter 15 as Jesus is sharing His parting instructions to His disciples. In [John 15:1-11](#), Jesus told His disciples that He is the vine and we are the branches; those who abide/remain in Him will bear much fruit, for apart from Him we can do nothing. He said that these things He told them (and us) so His joy may be in us and our joy be made full! His teaching continues with the topics of love, relations to the world, and encouragement to stay the course.

I. The Exhortation to Saints (John 15:12-17)

Jesus commands His disciples to love one another. The Greek word He uses for love is 'agapē'. Agapē love is defined as a pure, willful, sacrificial love that intentionally desires another's highest good. It is characterized by selflessness, unconditional acts of compassion, transcending mere emotions. This form of love reflects God's immeasurable love for humanity and is often associated with faithfulness and commitment. This is the love we are to show one another.

- Based on [vs. 12b](#), what is the example of how we are to love one another?
- Describe the image of the church that loves one another as Christ commanded.
- Look up [1 Cor. 13:4-7](#). What are the elements of love described in this passage?
 - What are the elements you feel strong in?
 - What are areas you need some work?
- Jesus said in [vs. 13](#) that greater love has no one than to lay down his life for his friends.
 - How did Jesus demonstrate His '*friendship*' to us?
 - Based on [Rom. 12:1](#), which states that we should offer ourselves as living sacrifices, and [vs. 14](#), how can we on a daily basis lay our lives down for Jesus?
- Jesus states in [vs. 16](#) that He chose you for a purpose, to bear fruit.
 - What are examples of bearing fruit?
 - How are you doing bearing fruit?
 - What fruit are you bearing?
 - What relationship does love have with bearing fruit?



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II. The Expectation of Saints (John 15:18-25)

Although within the church we should be experiencing love, in the world we can expect to experience hate. For those who hate Jesus will also hate us, if we are living obediently. To not live obediently is to live as the world. The world hates Jesus because the truth of Jesus shines light into the darkness, exposing sin. When the world's sin is exposed, conviction sets in, and they feel judged. Instead of responding with repentance, as the Christian should, they respond with hate.

- In the context of [John 15:18-25](#), how would you define the term 'world'?
- What are examples that the world may take exception to concerning Jesus, His teachings, and His redemptive work?
- How can you protect yourself from the influences of the world while still being an influence on the world?
- Based on Jesus' description of the world's perception of Him and Christians, why is it important to have strong relationships with other Christian brothers and sisters?
- How would you rank the strength of your relationships with other Christians?
- What can you do to improve that?

III. The Explanation of the Spirit (John 15:26-16:4)

Jesus teaches that we will not be left on our own to combat the hate of the world. There is coming a Helper to come along side us, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will provide direction, comfort, and instruction in how we can love and grow as a Christian, along with how to effectively engage a lost world.

- Based on [vss. 26-27](#), how does the Holy Spirit help us understand more about Jesus and share that understanding with others?
- Jesus is giving these warnings to His disciples to help them not stumble.
 - What does it mean to stumble as a Christian?
 - How can heeding Jesus' instructions help us not stumble?
 - How can being rejected by the world be a temptation to stumble?
- According to [16:2b](#), there will be deception and false teaching that encourages the rejection and even killing of Christians. How can we guard ourselves against such false teaching?
- With such a hateful attitude toward Christians, again, why is having strong Christian relationships important?
- How well equipped are you to be an encouragement for another who may be feeling rejected because of their Christian beliefs at places such as work?

While He remained with them, Jesus was the 'lightning rod' that attracted the flashes of persecution. But after He returned to the Father, His disciples (us) would experience it themselves. We need to be ready to withstand the 'lightning' of persecution.