

## Holy Textures

Meeting Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.  
Short, easy to use, faith-provoking insights.



## John 16:12-15

*We need to hear this brief section from Chapter 16, not as Jesus giving a lecture on the doctrine of the Trinity, but as a personally intense commitment of abiding, continuing, present love / loyalty / protection / guidance / bonding with his followers then - and now - and always.*



**Year C**

**Trinity Sunday**

**May 26, 2013**

*First Sunday after Pentecost Sunday*

Read the passage at the bottom of this post: [John 16:12-15, The Message](#) or [John 16:12-15, The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#).

Click [here](#) for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this note.

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. George Hermanson, "

Anyone with a Red-Letter edition of this Gospel - with the words of Jesus printed in red - will know that this passage comes in the second half of a long speech by Jesus to his disciples at their last meal together before he is arrested and brutally executed.

It began way back in John 13:1, where John comments:

*Now, before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart this world and go to the Father.*

And finishes at the end of Chapter 17, Verse 26, where Jesus concludes:

*I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

So we need to hear this brief section from Chapter 16, not as Jesus giving a lecture on the doctrine of the Trinity, but as a personally intense commitment of abiding, continuing, present love / loyalty / protection / guidance / bonding with his followers then - and now - and always. (Which may be all that needs to be said about the doctrine of the Trinity.)

To set the context for this passage, we need to recall the things Jesus has just said to his followers from Chapter 13 to here. Jesus had not spoken of them before, "because I was with you."

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But now that he is going away from them, he speaks of "these things" now so that his followers might know:

1. Jesus' foreknowledge of what is about to happen demonstrates that he is "above" the events. The earthly authorities may seem to be exercising power over him, over his body, but they do not really have any power or authority over Jesus.

Jesus goes forward with the full knowledge of the betrayal, denial, forsaken abandonment, and brutal pain that lies ahead, not because he is a masochist, and not because this is a sacrifice that God requires in order to forgive us.

Jesus goes forward to reveal the glory of God, the honour of God, the loyalty of God; to make known the power of God's love; and to show the weakness and futility of violence, disloyalty, self-preservation, fear, death, etc., etc.

2. Jesus is "going away," but will also continue to abide - not with, but within his followers - as love, when his followers keep his commandments.

And also by a new presence, the Spirit of Truth.

Jesus still has many more things to say, but his followers cannot bear them now - presumably because of their grief, confusion, and fear.

However, at a later time, when they are ready to bear what else Jesus has to say, when that time comes, the Spirit of Truth will come and - just as Jesus has done while he was with them - the Spirit of Truth will guide them into all the truth.

They will recognize this Spirit, and be able to tell it apart from false or evil spirits (even ones that pretend to be the true spirit), because the Spirit of Truth will repeat only whatever she/he hears: "take what is mine and declare it to you." This is to say, the Spirit of Truth will be as loyal as Jesus, and therefore worthy of the same honour, trust, and obedience.

Whatever else we may try to say about the Trinity, one thing that cannot be overemphasized is the unity of purpose / loyalty / bonding.

The Trinity exemplify the quality of relationship that Jesus is seeking to be in with his followers; and desires they have with him, and with each other.

David Ewart,

[www.holytextures.com](http://www.holytextures.com)

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Note: Historical background information is primarily from Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, Social Science Commentary on the Gospel of John (see link below), pages 240-242.

\* [Link to Amazon.com Bibliography for Bruce Malina, Richard Rohrbaugh, et. al.](#), Social Science Commentary on ... The Synoptic Gospels; The Gospel of John; The Book of Acts; The Letters of Paul; The Book of Revelation; and others.

### John 16:12-15 (NRSV)

<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.

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### John 16:12-15 (The Message)

<sup>12</sup> "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't handle them now. <sup>13</sup> But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. He won't draw attention to himself, but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said. <sup>14</sup> He will honor me; he will take from me and deliver it to you. <sup>15</sup> Everything the Father has is also mine. That is why I've said, 'He takes from me and delivers to you.'

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