

## **Lent Day 28**

Saturday March 17, 2018

### **Reading:** John 14:16-31

<sup>28</sup> “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. <sup>30</sup> I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, <sup>31</sup> but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

### **Reflection**

In the book, *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens writes, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Dickens’s England was a place of prosperity due to the Industrial Revolution. The old order was changing and wealth was shifting from the hands of the aristocracy to the middle class. It was a time of technology leap and people were prospering. Some people. Others had become fodder for the mill. The poor were exploited to make the system run and they were packed into the cities, living in horrific conditions. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

Jesus is saying a similar thing in our passage. He knows it is time to die. He can feel the presence of the ruler of this world slipping up behind him with a dagger in his hand. Soon and very soon he will be betrayed to his death. He summarizes this as his time to leave. Of course his disciples are confused and upset. They have thrown in their lot with Jesus. They want him to succeed and to live. They want him to bring the revolution that will set Israel free at last. Now, they have an obscure idea that something is wrong. Things are not playing out the way they wanted. The master is leaving. It is the worst of times.

But, these are Jesus’s friends. His telling them of his departure isn’t for their grief or dismay, but so they know it’s no accident. Yes, he will be betrayed. Yes, the ruler of this age will take his life. But this isn’t failure — this is obedience and love. He’s let them know ahead so they can rejoice when they see it. This is the will of the Father and he is doing it out of loving obedience. Even better, they should celebrate because Jesus is returning to the Father. This in itself is cause for joyful celebration — the distance between Father and Son will be removed. Jesus is going home. And, the icing on the cake is when he goes to the Father, the Father and the Son will send the Spirit to dwell with Jesus’s believers for ever. He is the Spirit of Truth (Jesus is the Truth), he is the Helper, he will teach us all things, and he will bring to our remembrance everything Jesus has said. It is the best of times.

Christ crucified has always been the thorn that people cannot accept about Jesus. It can still be bothersome to us today. Too often I’ve heard preachers on Good Friday say, “It’s Friday, but Sunday’s coming.” But, we don’t need to rush past the cross. We need to embrace the moment of our salvation as the worst of times and the best of times.

### **Prayer**

Great giver of your Spirit, thank you for the loving obedience of your son. Thank you for not shying away from the cross and thank you for giving us the gift of your presence remaining with us. Amen.