

Jesus’s Farewell Message

Session 3: God with Us

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea

Christians have an advocate, the Holy Spirit, who lives within us so that we might learn truth and obey God’s commands.

Head Change

To know we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and can experience the power of God in our daily lives.

Heart Change

To feel comforted by the peace Jesus gives us through his Holy Spirit.

Life Change

To obey God’s commands in our everyday lives, empowered by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

OPEN

What is the best meal you have ever had? What made it the best?

Great food overloads our senses—the smell, taste, texture, the way it looks on the plate, and even the atmosphere all combine to create a beautiful experience. Even great company can elevate a meal from a passing snack to an extraordinary experience.

When we read the Bible, we find a description and invitation to experience God, much like a menu invites us to experience a meal. In this session, Francis shows us how God has made himself available to us through his Spirit and how his presence changes our everyday lives.

READ

Read John 14:15–31.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis Chan’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

Whom did Jesus send after he left his disciples?

What does it mean to be indwelt by God?

Why is it important to obey God’s commands?

Watch Session 3: God with Us (9 minutes).

Handwriting lines for notes

DISCUSS

Francis started this session by encouraging us to seek more from our Bible study. We shouldn't simply be looking for facts about God; we should desire to know him, experience the Holy Spirit's presence, and live in his truth.

In what ways do you try to relate to God or experience his presence in your everyday life?

When we talk about experiencing God, our minds might assume that means feeling God in an emotionally unique way. While that may be part of knowing God, Jesus explains it in much more active terms. Read John 14:15–24. **According to Jesus in verses 21, 23–24, what is the proof of our love for and relationship with God?**

We often want to feel God's presence. But Jesus doesn't tell us what it is like to feel God in our lives. Instead, he tells us to follow God in obedience. **In what ways do you think we experience God through obedience to his commands? Do you feel like obedience is the sort of experience you want from God? Why, or why not?**

In this passage, Jesus promises to send his disciples the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls him the Spirit of Truth and our Advocate. While we may not always recognize it, every time we learn something about God, grow in our faith, or feel conviction of sin, the Spirit is at work in us. **In what ways has the Holy Spirit been active in you recently?**

*[Note: Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Advocate. To learn more about this title and the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.]*

One of the primary blessings of the Spirit is his role in teaching and reminding us of truth. **What is one new truth you have learned about God through this study? What would it look like to thank and praise the Holy Spirit for opening your eyes to this truth?**

The Spirit guides us in truth and reminds us of Jesus's commands in a variety of ways: through Scripture, prayer, encouragement and accountability from friends, and by reminding us of truth when we are faced with tough decisions. Our responsibility as disciples of Jesus is to trust him and to follow where he leads us. **What is the Holy Spirit teaching you in your current season of life?**

Lined writing area for discussion responses.

*[Note: To learn more about understanding the Spirit’s leading, go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.]*

Talking about obedience is easy, but actually doing what God calls us to can be difficult. Obeying God can feel like an inconvenience, make us anxious, or even seem like an unusual way to live. **What worries, concerns, or excuses can keep us from obeying God? What specific excuses are keeping you from going where the Holy Spirit is leading you?**

In the midst of our worry, Jesus gives us another promise. In verse 18, he promises that he will not abandon us, but he also goes a step further. Read John 14:27–28.

Where in your life could you use some of God’s peace?

*[Note: To learn more about God’s peace, go to **Go Deeper Section 3** at the end of this study.]*

The world can only offer us circumstantial peace, which distress and fear can easily derail. But Jesus’s peace overcomes our distress and gives us courage regardless of our circumstances. **According to verses 18 and 28, what assurances does Jesus give us that allow us to be at peace?**

Knowing the end of the story can help us live well today. Even in situations where God feels far away—in chaos, unrest, and pain—we can trust that Jesus will not abandon us and is coming back for us. **In what ways does trusting in Jesus’s promises give you peace in your current circumstances?**

After promising us peace, Jesus showed his disciples what it looks like to love God. Read John 14:29–31.

Jesus’s obedience showed the world that he loved the Father and was meant to help the disciples believe in him. Likewise, when we obey God, it shows a watching world that we love God. **How could your obedience reveal your love for God to others?**

Obedience can also help others believe in God’s goodness, mercy, and faithfulness. **In what ways does your life reveal God’s goodness?**

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Jesus followed the Father’s plan, which ultimately led him to the cross. His active trust revealed his love for the Father. **What would it look like for you to actively love the Father this week, despite your feelings?**

*[Note: To learn more about Jesus and what he was feeling before he went to the cross, go to **Go Deeper Section 4** at the end of this study.]*

Francis challenged us to experience God by knowing and obeying him. Through this, he said that we would do the “greater works” Jesus told his disciples about. Today, our challenge isn’t to go and perform a miracle but to simply be faithful to God. **What is one small step of faithfulness you need to take today?**

LAST WORD

Jesus has not left us to figure out life by ourselves. We don’t have to struggle through trial and error to find truth. We have the Holy Spirit in us, revealing truth and guiding us. But are we willing to trust him?

The path to knowing and experiencing God is through simple obedience. It isn’t flashy, but faithfulness to the Holy Spirit is the way to a rich life with God.

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GO DEEPER

This section has two potential functions:

1. It can supplement your small group discussion with topics your group may be interested in. We've highlighted where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide. As the leader, it would be good to familiarize yourself with this section just in case your conversation turns to one of these topics.
2. These sections can also function as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider using these sections to deepen your group's study of John 13–17.

1. The *Paraklete*

In John 14, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit *parakletos*, which is most basically translated as “one called to come alongside.” Our Bibles often simplify it to mean advocate, comforter, or helper. None of these words fully capture the full meaning of *parakletos*, but each of our definitions gives us insight into who the Holy Spirit is and how he helps us.

Many older English translations translate *parakletos* as comforter. In the context of John 14, this translation makes a lot of sense. Jesus sends the Spirit to give us comfort and peace in our distress. **Where in your life do you need comfort? What would it look like to ask the Holy Spirit for his comfort and peace?**

The Spirit is not just a comforter but our advocate. He comes alongside us much like a good friend or lawyer would to support us or plead our case. Read John 15:26–27; 16:7–11. **In what ways does the Spirit act as an advocate for us? Why do you think we need an advocate to support us?**

The final, and more common, title used for the Holy Spirit is helper. But in today's culture, we tend to think of helpers as subordinates, almost like assistants. This is the opposite of how we should think of the Holy Spirit. We are the weak ones in need of his strong assistance, totally dependent on him to know truth (John 14:26) and even to pray (Romans 8:26–27). We are totally dependent on God; the Spirit helps us in our weakness. **In what ways do you need the Spirit's help in your current circumstances?**

The Holy Spirit comes alongside us in our need, distress, and sinfulness to help, comfort, and advocate for us. It is good that Jesus left because we now have a great *parakletos* present in our lives! Take a moment to praise and thank the Spirit for his work in your life.

2. Hearing the Holy Spirit

Christians talk about God speaking to us, but we don't normally hear an audible voice when he speaks. We talk about experiencing God's presence, but he isn't only found in the big, unexplainable moments of life. If we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, he is with us in both the exciting and mundane moments. While we may not know it, he is constantly at work in our lives. But how do we differentiate between his voice and our own thoughts or ideas when he doesn't audibly speak to us? **How would you answer that question? What experiences have you had where you believe God was speaking to you?**

The first step to discerning if God is speaking to you is to measure our experiences against what God has already said. If you believe God spoke to you, weigh what he said against the Scriptures. Read 2 Timothy 3:16.

God inspired, or spoke, the Scriptures; the Greek literally says the Scriptures are "breathed by God." The Bible is his intentional and explicit statement to us, which is why we often call it "God's Word." **What questions or concerns do you wish God would talk to you about? How might you search the Bible for answers? Who is someone that could help you find answers in Scripture?**

Because God cannot lie (Titus 1:2) and will not lead us into sin (James 1:13), we can be sure that any voice that contradicts Scripture or encourages sin is not God. Whether we think we are hearing God in a thought, desire, inclination, or vague feeling, if the message is from God it will always align with the Bible. **What do you think God is teaching or encouraging you to do today? In what ways is he guiding you to know him better? Live more like Christ? Serve and love others?**

If Scripture supports what you believe God told you to do, do it. When he speaks, we must respond. But if Scripture doesn't specifically contradict or address what you think God is telling you, evaluate what you believe God said.

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Read 1 John 4:1–3. **How can we know a spirit, or guidance, is coming from God?**

The Holy Spirit always points us to God and away from sin. When the Holy Spirit speaks, Jesus is always the main character. He doesn't act to make us more impressive, but to impress on us the greatness of Jesus. **In what ways have you seen God's guidance lead you to focus more on Jesus?**

Finally, if you are still unsure if guidance is coming from God or your own inner voice, pray. Read James 1:5–8. **What do we have to do when we ask God to give us wisdom? Where in your life could you use some wisdom?**

God is generous with wisdom. He sent his Son, gave us his Word, and indwells us by his Spirit so that we can believe what is right and know how to live. He doesn't want us to be lost in life but to know what to do and to trust him as we follow him in unclear situations. **What could it look like to be faithful to God's Word, even if your future is unsure?**

3. Peace Beyond Understanding

The peace that Jesus gives to us transcends our circumstances. Even when it looks like the world is falling apart, even when we don't feel at peace, we can know that God is in control and Jesus is coming back. But, despite what we know to be true, we still have stressful days, worry about the future, and experience difficult seasons in life. So how should we handle our circumstantial anxiety as Christians? **How do you cope with or confront your anxiety? Is that how you would like to respond?**

God does not abandon us in our trouble, even if it looks like he is far away. Read Philippians 4:6–7.

In this passage, Paul gives us a practical response to anxiety. **Write out the steps Paul gives us to confront anxiety.**

We typically don't like to think about our anxieties—we would much rather try to forget about them. But Paul first encourages us to talk to God about the things that are bothering us. **What would it look like to pray about your anxieties?**

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Paul then says to make a specific request, or petition, in our prayers. **What do you need from God in this moment?**

It may feel counterintuitive, but one of the most powerful ways to confront our anxiety is through thankfulness. Thinking about what God has done and is doing for you focuses us on his steadfast goodness rather than the uncertainty of the future. **What do you have to be thankful for? If you are struggling to think of things, start with the necessities of life he has provided for you.**

Despite what we feel and the way things look, God is near to us. When we are anxious and don't feel at peace, he wants us to pray, to come to him with our problems. **What is promised to us when we come to God with our anxiety? Do you think peace is the solution to your problems? Why, or why not?**

God may not change our circumstances, but he does change us within and through our circumstances. By giving us his peace, God helps us overcome, grow, and endure through whatever situation we are in. Go to God with your worries, fear, and stress. Thank him for his provisions. Lay your anxieties before him and seek his peace that goes beyond what we understand.

4. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

This study covers what is commonly called the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus's last sermon before his death and resurrection. After this sermon, Jesus spent some time alone with the Father in a garden just outside the walls of Jerusalem. Read Matthew 26:36–46. **What was Jesus feeling in the garden? In what ways have you felt afraid, stressed, worried, or desperate for God's help?**

Jesus knew God was calling him to die and was afraid, as any of us would be. But his response is different than ours might be. **In verse 39, what does Jesus resolve to do? How do you think you would respond if you knew your obedience would make your life more difficult?**

Fear is a good and healthy response to danger. Jesus's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane does not teach us to ignore our fears but to trust God and obey him even when we are fearful. **What can make it difficult to trust God when you are anxious or afraid?**

God is not trying to trick or rob us. Anything he asks us to do is for our good, but we may have to give up some things or go through some difficulty when we follow him (John 15:20; 1 Peter 4:12–19). **What has God asked you to do that scares you? What will it cost you?**

Jesus was distressed but resolved to be faithful. He was courageous, trusting God and his plan instead of in his fears and anxieties. **What does it look like for you to be courageously faithful in your current circumstances?**