JOHN 16:1

THAT YOU SHOULD NOT STUMBLE

Agreeing with Jesus' Assessment of the World

John 15:18–16:1



STUART GREAVES

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

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That You Should Not Stumble

These things I have spoken to you, that you should not stumble. (John 16:1)

In John 13–17 Jesus gives four purpose statements for the Upper Room instruction. “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you” (John 15:11). “These things I command you, that you love one another” (John 15:17). “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not stumble” (John 16:1). “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace” (John 16:33). Those sentences can be read over the whole discourse. They can also be read over the block of teaching that sits immediately before them. For our context the second reading matters. Just before John 16:1, Jesus has spoken John 15:18–27. He has told them what the world is, what the world will do, and why the Spirit must come. Then He says He has spoken these things so that they would not stumble.

Two days earlier, on the Mount of Olives, He had described the generation of His return: social crisis, health crisis, emotional and spiritual crisis, geopolitical crisis, environmental crisis (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). In the middle of that landscape He said, “See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet” (Matthew 24:6). In the Upper Room He picks the sentence up again. “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1). “Peace I leave with you… Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). John 13–17 is line upon line instruction in how a heart stays steady under pressure: dialogue with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, a life filled with righteousness, peace, and joy, so that the church does not fall away.

Paul is blunt about what is coming. “That Day will not come unless the falling away comes first” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The book of Hebrews is full of the same warning. This is not the Lord snatching salvation from a people who want Him. It is the terrifying possibility that a person who has named the name of Jesus, even a person who has known a born-again experience, can come, under the pressures of life and culture and under a long agreement with darkness in the soul, to the place of saying with the mouth, I do not want this anymore. Jesus means that in John 16:1. He is telling them these things so that they would not stumble, so that they would not fall away.

The beginnings of that dynamic are already in the earth. It is popular to speak of deconstructing the faith. It sounds clever, intellectual, proper, even responsible. Searching the Scriptures as a Berean is not that. Testing a preacher by the Word, which is strongly encouraged, is not that. What is rising is the questioning of the authority of Scripture, of the nature and character of God, of God’s assessment of the human race, of whether the cross was necessary, of

whether Jesus is the only way. The main and plain of the faith, the ideologies and pragmatism as philosophical orientation, is being treated as optional in the name of being thoughtful. It is a deception. It will increase. At the same time the Spirit will move, and there will be a great harvest. Both can be true. We are living in increasingly troubling days. The church still needs Jesus' assessment of the world, or she will misread the hour and stumble.

John 13–17 happens about two days after the Olivet discourse. Jesus describes prophetic and peculiar dynamics in the generation of His return, then commands the church not to be troubled. A couple of days later, at the Passover table, He starts again: let not your hearts be troubled. He is picking up the same exhortation and then giving the how to overcome a troubled heart. How we relate to God. How we enter conversation with the Godhead. How hearts are filled with peace and joy and kept steady so that we do not stumble, as He says in John 16:1. The connection between John 14:1, 14:27, the call to joy in 15:11, love in 15:17, peace in 16:33, and not stumbling in 16:1 is deliberate. What He commands, He also supplies in fellowship with Himself.

The Pride and Peril of a Troubled Heart

A troubled heart is a fearful, weighed down, and vulnerable heart. It is a heart trying to stabilize itself under pressure. Isaiah 40:29-31 sits behind the Upper Room on this point. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men utterly fall. What is coming is intense enough that youthful resilience will not be enough. Those who wait on the Lord, those who actually interact with Him, renew their strength. An inner fortress is built by His presence: righteousness, peace, and joy. That is why Jesus joins "do not be troubled" to joy that remains, love for one another, peace in Him, and not stumbling.

Worry is not a personality quirk. When Jesus says do not worry, He is not offering a suggestion. A heart weighed down with worry and anxiety hinders the growth of joy and peace. It preoccupies a person with managing emotions until it becomes difficult to step out of feelings and narratives and give oneself to the person in front of you in love. Love is the God-given ability, by grace, to give yourself to another in humility and service. Worry or anxiety turns the heart inward and toward self-absorption. It also chokes the Word (Matthew 13). Proverbs 12:25 says an anxious heart causes depression. Whereas there may be some psychiatric battles that need medical care, that is not the majority case. For most of the human race anxiety is a spiritual matter of the mind and soul needing to obey the word of the Father and His Son, and at the end of the age it will threaten mental health on a wide scale. Jesus is protecting the church when He says, Do not be troubled.

Worry is rooted in pride. It exists because we have bought an exaggerated confidence in our abilities, our assessments, and our narratives. Anxiety rises when those three things are exposed, when a crisis, a limitation, or another person's word shows that our abilities are frail, our reading of the room is frail, and the story we have been telling ourselves is frail. Paul calls those mindsets strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4). The word is military. Forts are built for safety. That is why we do not like changing our minds. We find safety in the way we see. Then life hits the fortress and we discover it was straw. The Old Testament answer is not, strengthen the mud house. It is, make the Lord your fortress, your refuge, your strong tower. Find safety in His presence, His ways, His assessment. Abandon yours and lean into His.

Worry is our attempt to control the outcome of our own life, family, friends, and world by leaning on our abilities, assessment, and narratives rather than Jesus' leadership. We are, if we tell the truth, control freaks. Some have perfected it further than others. The bottom line remains. We like to control the outcome. We know exactly what is going on. The story has to go where we said it would go. That is not the leadership of Jesus.

Stephen Charnock, writing in the 1600s in The Existence and Attributes of God, spent nearly a thousand pages on the knowledge of God. He called worry practical atheism: denying the existence of God in practice and setting our own abilities, narratives, and assessments on the throne of the soul. "Practical atheism is natural to man in his depraved state, and very frequent in the hearts and lives of men." (Stephen Charnock) Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33). The wrestle underneath John 15:18–16:1 is this: we think our reading of the world is the way forward. It is not. We are called to cling to the Lord's power, the Lord's assessment, and the Lord's narrative concerning the world, both as it pertains to its present condition and eternal future.

There is a lot of talk in the culture, and now in the church, about not feeling safe. Some physical reasons for that must be taken seriously. Christian kindness is not optional. But it is worth asking whether some of the explosion of "I do not feel safe" is what happens when a stronghold is challenged. The feeling is real. The answer is not to reinforce the fortress. The answer is to find another one. It is called truth. His Name is our fortress. God is a very present help in trouble. His ways, His wisdom, His presence, our interaction with Him, that is safety.

Another Gospel

> *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel. (Galatians 1:6)*
>
> *For if he who comes preaches another Jesus… or a different gospel which you have not accepted. (2 Corinthians 11:4)*

Over several decades another gospel has grown in the Body of Christ. It is subtle. It centers on two things: the nature of God as a righteous Judge, and the nature of sinful humanity as rebellious children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). Paul warned of another Jesus, a different spirit, a different gospel than the one received at the new birth (2 Corinthians 11:4).

The break of agreement shows up as an increased emphasis on brokenness instead of sinfulness, and as the claim that brokenness is the reason for sinful behavior. Brokenness is real. “He heals the brokenhearted” (Psalm 147:3). Jesus is anointed to heal the brokenhearted (Luke 4:18). Anguish and distress are real. Life is more complex than therapeutic slogans. Yet the Scripture does not present woundedness as the primary diagnosis of the human race. John the Baptist did not say, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the brokenness of the world. He said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). If all we were was wounded, we would need a therapist, not a Savior. When Jesus died, it was a payment for sin, the sins we committed and said yes to, and the sins committed against us that have left wounds. If brokenness is our primary orientation, it will always be somebody else’s fault.

Romans 5:14 says death reigned from Adam to Moses. Paul is saying that a primary message of Genesis is that sin entered the world. He does not say brokenness reigned. He does not say woundedness reigned. “By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). Genesis through Deuteronomy awaken us to the condition of the race. Exodus is more troubling than Sunday-school memory makes it. The Lord delivers Hebrew slaves from the most powerful empire of the day, drowns Pharaoh’s army, and then gives them the Law in the wilderness. The Law looks them in the eye and says, You are no different than your former slave masters. That is the gospel’s honesty about us. We came into the new birth not as an upgrade on good people, but as those freed from the power of sin and given the Holy Spirit to walk out emancipation from darkness.

Jesus’ Assessment of the World

> *If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. (John 15:18)*

Jesus is not using a soft word. The question rises immediately: Are You sure it is hate, Lord? Are You sure it is not disagreement, or dislike? He says it is hate. John 15:18–27 is critically important instruction on two things at once: the condition of the world, and the church's need for the engagement and activity of the Spirit to break through. The world is under deep darkness and deception. "The god of this age has blinded" the minds of those who do not believe, "lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Corinthians 4:4). There is a satanically energized veil on the minds of the unbelieving world. The purpose of the veil is to hinder perception of the gospel and of the knowledge of God. Paul can also say that the same veil creeps into the church. Paul warns the church to not come under that veil again (2 Corinthians 11:2-3). This is a real war.

John uses "world" with a particular weight. About eighty to ninety percent of John's Gospel is unique to John. Matthew, Mark, and Luke overlap. John brings another lens. When Jesus says the world hates Him, He is not describing a neutral public that would receive Him if the branding were better. "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:10-11). "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19).

Jesus as a Man (John 1:14) confronts the dilemma of the whole creation. He pays for our judgment (Romans 3:25). He triumphs over and confronts evil (Colossians 2:14-15; Revelation 5:4-7). He entered the realm of darkness, remained sinless, died, and defeated Satan in that moment. That is why the gospel is good news in the most dire circumstance the evil of this world can produce. One of the most powerful sentences a human being ever spoke is still John the Baptist's cry: Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Not agreeing with heaven's perspective on the condition of the world will be a source of stumbling for many. The seeds are already in this generation. Jesus taught John 15:18–27 so that the disciples could make sense of the true condition of the world and of the context in which they would witness. He then promised the Helper. "When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness" (John 15:26-27).

The Rage of the Nations

> *Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed. (Psalm 2:1-2)*

Throughout history the nations have been enraged at God and His leadership. That rage will reach apocalyptic height, and the love of darkness in human beings will fully manifest. “Men loved darkness rather than light” (John 3:19). We are living in a time where things are spoken now that would have been unthinkable a generation ago, and spoken at length, with an ability to make sense of nonsense. Isaiah said that a day would come when good will be spoken of as evil and evil as good. From the beginning sin entered the world. The love of darkness is real. It will be allowed its fullest expression before the Lord returns.

The Father still loves the world with great longing. He sent Jesus to become a Man and die so that those who respond to the gospel may come into deep relationship and partnership with the Trinity. Psalm 2 holds the paradox. The nations rage, and in the same psalm the Father says to the Son, Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as Your inheritance (Psalm 2:8). Why would the Father’s gift to His Son be a people enraged against Him? Because He loves them. They are image bearers, created to reflect His character in relation to one another and to enter fellowship with the Trinity. Those who are born again become His prize, the inheritance the Father gives the Son. The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). The Father knew what creating the world would cost, and love compelled Him to create it and to send the Son. “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). “We love Him because He first loved us.”

That love coexists with displeasure. “God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psalm 7:11). John 3:16 and Psalm 7:11 are both Scripture. In John 15:18–21 Jesus is connecting the disciples to Psalm 2. The nations rage against the gospel and plot to remove its influence. The early church quoted Psalm 2 over the crucifixion (Acts 4:25-28). Isaiah 53 tells us God was directly involved in the death of His Servant. Acts 4 tells us the rage of the nations was involved as well.

That rage continues in the persecuted church. A vast number are still killed every year for the gospel. John saw a coming global increase so intense that Babylon is described as drunk with the blood of the martyrs, a culture so bloodthirsty that people lose their sense of reality. Daniel and John describe the end as an all-out war against the saints. “The same horn was making war

against the saints, and prevailing against them… the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time" (Daniel 7:21-25). "It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them" (Revelation 13:7). At the end, government leaders will ratify legislation and state-sponsored violence aimed at destroying the church in the earth. Jesus says, I am telling you this so that you do not trip and your faith fail.

Sin: The Willful Insistence to Go Our Own Way

Where we land on the question, What is sin? is critical. Sin is the willful insistence to go our own way. Emphasis on willful. The general human perspective is that humanity is good and that we are positioned to fix what is wrong. That is not the gospel. We have no ability to save ourselves. Our assessment of the human condition is flawed. Our narrative about the eternal destiny of the wicked is off. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Hamartiology is the study of the origin and nature of sin. The philosophical question is asked, If God created everything, and He did not create evil, where did sin come from? Where we land on the answer is critical. Sin came into operation when Lucifer chose himself over God's leadership. It entered the world when Adam and Eve chose to do the same. It was not an abstract force sitting on a shelf. It was a choice: do I trust and follow God's leadership, or do I establish and follow my own? Sin is the exaltation of the self-life over God.

That is why Jesus declares such a fierce war on egotism. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). If we do not see that the issue is self, we will measure our lives by what we did or did not do and fall into the sin of the Pharisees: clean on the outside, a cemetery on the inside. Another way to say egotism is unbelief. Unbelief is not merely doubt. It is clinging to our assessments, narratives, and abilities as the means of happiness and pleasure. In unbelief we declare that our way is better. Genesis 2:9 says God made every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food. Genesis 3:6 says the woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise. God wants what is good, pleasant, and desirable for us. "They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures" (Psalm 36:8). The issue was not desire. The issue was whose way would govern desire. Adam and Eve chose theirs.

God did not create sin. He gave humanity the dignity of choice, because love cannot exist without it. The choice is to follow Him in love or to choose

ourselves above Him and His ways. Pride is a serious issue. A quiet shift in the culture, and in the church, has exchanged the old sentence “that hurt my pride” for “that wounded me, that traumatized me, that triggered me, I do not feel safe.” Abuse is real and must not be minimized. That is not the subject here. The subject is a prevailing mindset that no longer has a category for pride. Jeremiah 2:13 names two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. The evil is not only immoral acts. It is forsaking God and forging our own path toward satisfaction.

So We Will Not Stumble

Jesus wants us to know the true condition of the world so that we can relate to unbelievers properly as a loving witness, and so that we can interpret what is happening in the culture of our country and the nations. Do not call an unbelieving friend on the phone and announce that they are a God-hater. This teaching is for the church’s understanding. Our shock at the culture is often a sign that we have not accepted the Lord’s assessment. Getting the right person in office can restrain evil. It will not remove the mess. The mess is the human heart apart from Christ.

If we are not careful, a slow perception takes root: unbelievers want Jesus, and if we only package the message rightly they will respond. Gandhi is often quoted, “I like your Christ but not your Christianity,” as proof that the church is the problem. The church does need significant adjustment. The Lord wants an accurate witness in message and in life. It is also true that resistance toward Christ is due to the independent rebellion of humanity. There is no record that Gandhi submitted to Jesus’ leadership. John 1 already said the world did not know Him and His own did not receive Him. The more effective the witness becomes, Jesus indicates, the more the hatred can manifest. There is a great harvest coming, an outpouring like Joel saw, in the midst of eschatological hostility. Both are in the book.

To identify the world primarily through the lens of brokenness instead of deep sinfulness produces a friendship with the world that hinders and dilutes the gospel witness. Friendship here is not kindness, presence, or relationship with those who do not know the Lord. Those are required. Friendship with the world is agreement with the world’s value system concerning the human condition. “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4).

Seeker-sensitive messaging, and a therapeutic gospel beside it, set believers up to stumble when they meet the hatred of the culture. The pattern is predictable.

You present Jesus. They get angry. The conclusion becomes, I must have said it wrong. I will adjust the message until no one is angry, because after all they want Jesus. Adjust and accommodate until it is no longer the gospel, and that diet inside the church becomes a slope toward apostasy. “If he who comes preaches another Jesus… or a different gospel… you may well put up with it” (2 Corinthians 11:4). Jesus tells us the condition of the world so that when resistance comes we do not rewrite the message. “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble” (John 16:1).

The Helper Who Testifies

> *When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. (John 15:26)*

Because of sin, the unbelieving world, such as we were, is inwardly dead in trespasses (Ephesians 2:4-5). To possess life is to have the ability to function, change, sustain, grow, and produce. We were designed to know that in spiritual and emotional life, not only in the body. The most neglected glory available to the church is union with the Trinity through the indwelling Spirit. We have become the temple of God. Eye has not seen what God has prepared, but God has revealed them through His Spirit, that we might know the things freely given to us (1 Corinthians 2:9-12). We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:7).

The Spirit’s primary work in the believer is to testify, to speak in us about Jesus, and to form Christ in the soul. “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14-15). “At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” (John 14:20). Understanding that union is a primary key to the realm of God’s love (John 15:9; 17:23), grace (John 14:6; Colossians 3:4), and power (John 14:12). “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him” (2 Peter 1:3). Power over the self-life is not self-effort alone. There is effort, but it is effort energized by the life of God released in intimacy. The more the Spirit shows us God, the more the heart is strengthened and the self actually dies.

We die to self as we see Him. No one sees God and lives. Every time we interact with Him the self-life comes under His leadership. Simple phrases spoken to the Lord in the moment an emotion rises, thank You, show me more, five seconds of turning, often release life that surprise us. We obey. When we fall short we confess. We do not blame-shift. We ask Him to forgive, wash, strengthen, and heal. That is why Jesus told Nicodemus no one enters the

kingdom unless he is born again. God living inside us by the Spirit is not a metaphor. It is the only power that can overcome the self-life.

The Spirit also testifies to the world. He confronts the veil by releasing light on the heart and giving every person opportunity to respond to the gospel. “He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8-11). Much that is called gospel today lacks those three. Paul sat before Felix and reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, and Felix was afraid (Acts 24:25). That is what the Spirit does. He comes with the fear of the Lord. The world needs it. The church needs it: the veil pulled back, fuller agreement with who He is, with His assessment, His narrative, His ability.

If the world is mostly wounded people, then every time the gospel is resisted we will conclude that our package must change. The gospel will keep accommodating until it is no longer the gospel, and that becomes the diet that produces the stumble of John 16:1. Jesus has told us what the world is. He has told us who the Spirit is. He has told us why. The way forward is not a better reading of our own press. It is agreement with His.

Paul puts the veil and the message together. “Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:3-5). The issue is not first our cleverness. The issue is a blinded mind and a preached Christ. The Spirit breaks the veil. We bear witness. We do not become the message.

This is why Jesus can love the world and tell the truth about the world in the same evening. He is not licensing contempt. He is saving the church from naivete. A loving witness who has agreed with His assessment will not be shocked into silence, and will not flatter the darkness in order to keep a hearing. He will speak of sin, righteousness, and judgment because that is what the Spirit is already saying. He will also speak of a Lamb who takes sin away, a Father who gave the Son, a Spirit who lives in earthen vessels. That is the gospel. Anything less will not hold when the nations rage.

The falling away of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is not a footnote. Hebrews warns of hearts hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, of people who shrink back. The question people ask, can you lose your salvation, is often the wrong first question. The New Testament warning is personal and moral: you can come to a place where you no longer want Him. Jesus tells the truth in advance so that day does not arrive as a surprise. These things I have spoken to you, that you should not stumble.

Return, then, to the table. Two days after He told them not to be troubled by wars and rumors of wars, He sat with them and opened the life of the Trinity. Joy that remains. Love for one another. Peace in Him. A Helper who testifies. An honest map of the world that hated Him first. The church that takes that map will not need to invent a softer Jesus in order to survive the hour. She will need the real One, and she will find that He is enough.

Consider again how serious Jesus is about the heart. Of all the things He could have emphasized after listing wars, pestilence, earthquakes, and nation against nation, He said, Do not be troubled. That ranking should arrest us. A troubled heart does not only feel bad. It loses the ability to love in truth because it cannot get out of its own feelings and its own story. There are feelings, and there are narratives. Agreeing with Jesus' assessment means we refuse to let our story about the world sit above His.

The same is true of the self-life in its everyday dress. The culture has many names for it. Absorption with self. Dependence on self. Gratification of self. Governance of self. The establishment and expression of self. "Just be yourself" can be a way of refusing a Lord. Jesus is not at war with personality, talent, or the ordinary desire for a family. He is at war with the self that will not come down from the throne. That is why the new birth matters so much. God takes residence. The temple is no longer only a building in Jerusalem. The Holy of Holies is a people. Divine power is given for life and godliness through knowing Him, not through staring at ourselves.

He loves the world enough to tell the church the truth before the pressure peaks. He loves the church enough to warn her that a wrong diagnosis will become a wrong gospel, and a wrong gospel will not hold. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Come into agreement with that sentence, and the hour, however fierce, does not have to become the place where we stumble.

Father, we agree with Your Son's assessment of the world. Deliver us from a troubled heart. Tear down the strongholds of our own press. Keep us from another gospel. Teach us to love the world as You love it, without making peace with its darkness. Holy Spirit, testify of Jesus in us and through us. Convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Keep us from stumbling. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. What four purpose statements does Jesus give in John 15:11, 15:17, 16:1, and 16:33 for the things He has spoken?
2. According to John 15:18-19, what does Jesus say the world has done toward Him, and why does it hate His disciples?
3. Why does Jesus join the Mount of Olives command “see that you are not troubled” (Matthew 24:6) to the Upper Room command “let not your heart be troubled”?
4. How does this study describe the relationship between worry, pride, and the strongholds of 2 Corinthians 10:4?
5. What is the difference between naming brokenness as real and making brokenness the primary diagnosis of the human race?
6. How can Psalm 2 hold both the rage of the nations and the Father’s gift of those nations to the Son?
7. What does it mean that sin is “the willful insistence to go our own way,” and how does Genesis 3:6 show that?
8. Where have you treated resistance to the gospel as a packaging problem rather than as the world’s hatred of the light?
9. Which of your present assessments, narratives, or abilities is being exposed as a straw fortress, and what would it mean to make the Lord your stronghold there?
10. How will you practice agreement with the Spirit’s testimony this week, both in your own soul and in witness, without softening sin, righteousness, and judgment?

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Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

Jesus told the Twelve why He was speaking. These things, He said, so that you should not stumble. John 15:18–16:1 is His assessment of the world: its hatred, its rage, its sin, and the Spirit who still testifies in the middle of it.

A troubled heart is a vulnerable heart. Agreement with another gospel sets the church up to fall when the culture's hatred appears.