



*I did not tell you this from the beginning, because I was with you;
but now I am going to the one who sent me.
Not one of you asks, 'Where are you going?'
Yet you are sad at heart because I have told you this.
Still, I am telling you the truth: it is for your own good that I am going,
because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you;
but if I go, I will send him to you.
And when he comes, he will show the world how wrong it was,
about sin, and about who was in the right, and about judgement;
about sin: in that they refuse to believe in me;
about who was in the right: in that I am going to the Father and you will see me no more;
about judgement: in that the prince of this world is already condemned.
I have still many things to say to you but they would be too much for you to bear now.
However, when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth,
since he will not be speaking of his own accord, but will say only what he has been told;
and he will reveal to you the things to come.
He will glorify me, since all he reveals to you will be taken from what is mine.
Everything the Father has is mine: that is why I said:
all he reveals to you will be taken from what is mine.*

John 16: 5-15

Keep your eyes upon Jesus

Thursday 4th week before Lent

We can best appreciate these words by reading them as a reflection from the end of the first century about the Christian experience of the previous 70-odd years. As more non-New Testament documents come to light, we are recognising that a strong, perhaps dominant trend in the early church was to see the risen Christ in the Spirit as the source of 'teaching', meaning in practice that anyone could claim any teaching as being from Jesus in the Spirit. The dilemma with which the church struggled was how to hold on to the experience of the Spirit while anchoring the revelation of truth such that it was not subject to every whim and fancy of those 'inspired'.

Against this background, we can begin to grasp what John is saying. The experience of the Spirit is real and powerful and continues and deepens the revelation that began with the historical life of Jesus. This is the charter for the dynamic theological development that characterises the church and continues in our own day. But John insists that the revelation through the Spirit is always anchored in the determinative person of the Jesus of history. If we lose touch with our connection to Jesus we become lost in a morass of relativity.