



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: Encounters with Jesus – A Ministry of Absence**

**Speaker: Rich Villodas, Lead Pastor**

**Scripture: John 16:7**

I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, "Where are you going?" Rather you are filled with good because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to but if I go, I will send him to you.

*John 16:7*

**Sermon Outline:**

- I. Christianity is a story of presence, but here Jesus tells the disciples he is leaving.
- II. Over and over again, God longs to be with his people and they continually go the other way. God loves us so much he incarnated into man to be with us.
- III. His absence allows for us to have a new dimension of his presence. Because the Spirit is in you, you are never alone.
- IV. Because the Spirit is in you, you can become like Christ. He has given us a spirit so we can be like Christ where ever we go.
- V. Whether we feel His presence or not, God ultimately holds all things together.

**Sermon Summary:**

Pastor Rich Villodas offers the 5th sermon in the Encounters with Jesus series, and a ministry of absence. Pastor Rich speaks on his last Sunday before going on sabbatical.

**Sermon Questions:**

- I. What words or phrases from this scripture passage resonated in you as you read them? Why?
  - In your family of origin, was there a person(s) you would enjoy or look forward to seeing at family gatherings? What brought forth your enjoyment of that person?
  - Conversely, what is your response or feelings after losing someone close to you?
  - If Christ has given us a spirit it means we are never alone, and He is there in both our joys and our losses. Having his spirit in us means that we are able to carry His presence wherever we go. Knowing this truth, how should this change how we live our day to day lives
  - Have you had a time when you felt God was absent or distant?
  - What actions can you take this week to be more attuned to his presence? e.g. study, worship, silence, prayer, contemplation...