**Fixing Our Hearts on Jesus**

**Untroubled: Relying on the Comfort of Christ**

**Joy Beyond Troubles of this World**

**John 16:16-33**

Please turn with me to John 16:16-33.

**5 reasons that Jesus provides us lasting joy beyond the troubles of this world**

**I. Jesus Turns Temporary Sorrow to Lasting Joy (v.16-22)**

**A. Jesus knows the time of grieving**

To set the context, in verses 7-15, the disciples are fully aware that their Lord is going back to heaven.

And that doesn’t make them happy, but rather sorrowful and confused.

So Christ tells them that he would send to them the Holy Spirit. With the arrival of the Spirit, he would do three things.

* The Holy Spirit will guide them into all truth (16:13)
* The Holy Spirit will declare to them the things to come (16:13)

The Holy Spirit will glorify Christ (16:14)

Then after he speaks on the arrival of the Spirit, he said this to his disciples –

Verse 16 “A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.”

Notice the phrase ***“A little while”* (v. 16, 17, 18, 19)** You see that phrase over and over again.

Jesus often spoke in figurate language.

So when it came to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection – his disciples were confused about that.

And that confusion would not lift until Christ was resurrected from the dead.

It is then that they would understand what he was talking about. But our Lord understands his people.

In fact, he knows his people’s grief…

**B. Jesus knows our grief before and better than we do**

Notice verse 18 – “So they were saying, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’?

**John 16:18** *“We do not know what he is talking about.”* Keep in mind, this was a private deliberation between the disciples.

Why they didn’t just ask Jesus directly is anyone’s guess, but our Lord knew they were having this discussion because he knows the thoughts and intents of his people’s hearts.

Imagine that! Here you have the Lord, the creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible, standing right there before you.

And you’re not going to ask him what he means by what he said?

Let’s keep reading…

**John 16:19** *“Jesus knew that they wished to question Him,* and He said to them, “Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me’?

Now, at this point you’d think our Lord would alleviate their confusion but instead, but that’s not what he does – well, not right now anyway.

He plainly tells them a prophetic reality of what is going to happen when he is killed.

Now, let’s see what he says…

 **21**Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. **22**Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one *will* take your joy away from you.

**John 16:20, 22** *“Truly, Truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament…you will grieve… Therefore you too have grief now…”* (stop)

In other words, Jesus’ followers will weep and lament his death – but again, it’s only for a time.

Now, go back to verse 20 where it says…

**John 16:20** *- …the world will rejoice…*

That is to say, while his disciples are in a state of mourning, the world will rejoice.

Last week I had the opportunity to explain this a bit more

In John 15:18-19 our Lord said to his disciples

Verse 18 – *“If the world hates you…*[that is, the evil world system of fallen human beings and fallen angels, including Satan – the *world* in that sense]

If the world hates/*detests you/pursues with hatred/resents* (**μισέω)** it’s because of who you follow.

And it’s because of your relationship to Christ and to the kingdom of light that the world will persecute you at every level of society.

Verse 19 *“If you were of the world, the world would love its own…”*

If you represent this evil world system and its values, *they will embrace you*.

But understand that no sooner when you said “*I do”* to Christ, his encouragement to you – his promise to you – is nothing more than what Jesus had received from the world – *you will be persecuted!*

You will be persecuted because you are bearing witness against this evil world system because you speak and live a life of Gospel truth!

So when the leaders had rejoiced at the murder of Christ, they rejoiced because they really thought that having Christ would prove that he is not the Son of God.

Having Christ killed would supposedly proved that he was no Savior at all because Christ could not save himself.

Remember, his enemies ridiculed and mocked Christ while he was on the Cross, saying “He saved others; He cannot save Himself.

He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him.” – Matthew 27:42

So, while Jesus’ disciples are weeping over the death of their Lord, Christ enemies will be rejoicing…but it’s only for a “little while.”

All that changed with the empty tomb…

Then our Lord paints for us an illustration of a woman and childbirth.

**John 16:21** *“Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come…”* While studying for t

**C. Jesus promises joy that cannot be taken away**

**John 16:20** *“…but your grief will be turned into joy.”* The illustration is easy to understand…

**John 16:21** *“*…when she gives birth to the child, *she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy…*”

In other words, the baby that brought about her pain will also bring about her joy.

So then, the instrument that would bring about the disciples pain (ie the cross) would be the same instrument that would bring about their joy.

While writing this sermon, I read about a woman who was dying from a 10-year battle with cancer. Her pastor came to visit her.

She looked at her pastor with tears in her eyes and said, “I can’t take it anymore.”

It’s one thing to hurt for a day, but when the pain lasts for a month or a year, and then that year turns into ten years, all of a person’s reserves of strength seem to drain away.

Her pastor would go on to say how this woman had trusted God through that whole time, and she finally said, “I can’t take it anymore.”

Within a few days, the Lord took her home, took her away from the pain and the lament of unspeakable joy.

I don’t know that woman, but I’m telling you that her sorrow has turned into an eternal joy and we will see her in the kingdom someday.

Let me tell you something else: when Jesus told us to take up our Cross and follow him, that involves a lot of spiritual pain, but it’s a kind of pain that leads to spiritual maturity.

But there will come a point in our spiritual lives when our faith will become sight.

And the spiritual pain that we experience now will be no more because the Lord will call us home.

The kind of change Jesus promised his disciples would go from pain of losing their Master to that of joy when they see him again.

So our Lord said…

**John 16:22** *“…I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.*”

Why? Because there is joy

**II. The Joy of Access to the Father to Pray in Jesus’s Name (v.23-24, 26-27)**

**John 16:23-24** *“In that day you will not question Me about anything.”* That is to say, the resurrection would change everything. It would prove who Jesus is and that everything he said was true. Let’s keep reading…

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”*

God delights in answering his people’s prayer. My wife and I have a prayer journal.

In that prayer journal are short term prayer requests and long term prayer requests.

My wife and I can look back in that journal to not only see the things we’ve prayed, but also how the Lord chose to answer those specific petitions we raised up to the Lord.

And it made us happy. Happy that the Lord is answering our prayers.

Now, there are other prayer requests such that the Lord has determined not to answer – and that’s ok.

We understand that our prayer requests must line up with God’s will.

If they do, he answers those prayers.

If not, then he doesn’t it. Some prayer requests take longer than others, but the Lord will make it clear that he has answered your prayers.

Does it make your heart full knowing that the God who created you is pleased to answer your prayer requests?

And when they are answered, is your heart full knowing that you are a child of the King?

That you truly belong to Christ?

When God answers your prayers, that is proof of the resurrection.

The disciples had many questions to ask Jesus about his death, burial, and resurrection.

They were perplexed and confused.

I’ve often wondered why the confusion, and as best I can put together, I believe the theology of the day was not that of a crucified Messiah, but a conquering one!

A Messiah who would come to destroy Gentile rule.

The rabbis didn’t have in their theology a crucified Messiah.

They couldn’t even conceive of such a concept.

It was foreign to them.

That is until Jesus came and began to point out to them that Messiah came to die, then be resurrected according to the Scriptures.

That’s when they affectively lost their collective minds. The disciples thought the same thing.

So when Jesus taught them that he was going to die and be resurrected, the Scriptures went against the grain of their thinking and they were perplexed and upset as a result.

So it’s reasonable that they would have had number of questions to ask their Lord.

But the resurrection would dispel any and all questions by the disciples.

Note what our Lord said in verses 26-27.

**John 16:26-27** *“In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf…” (stop)* this is somewhat puzzling.

Let me explain it this way so that it makes sense.

In Roman Catholic theology, they teach that God the Father is indifferent to our prayers, so you have to go through, not Jesus first –

but to Mary to hear your prayers before Jesus. Mary is called the Co-Redemptrix and the Mediatrix of all graces.

To Roman Catholics, while Jesus dispenses redeeming grace to all mankind, Mary is the one who ensures those who will receive it.

So you need to go through Mary first because she is the mother of…mercy.

God the Father is indifferent to our prayers, as you cannot go to him directly.

That’s why Roman Catholics pray, *“Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee…”*

This teaching is not the teaching of Christ. It is not the teaching of Scripture, based on what our Lord said in this passage.

When Jesus said “*In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf…”*

He is saying that God the Father is not indifferent to your prayer request.

Now that you are in Christ, you now have direct access to God the Father, and you can ask him anything!

Why?

*“for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.”*

Because you love God the Son, God the Father loves you!

Saying “In Jesus name” at the end of your prayers is not some magic formula to get what you want.

All it means is that you want your heart to be in alignment with his will!

You see…there is joy of having direct access to God the Father…

**III. The Joy of Plain Talk about God the Father (v.25, 29)**

**John 16:25** *“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.”*

This explains why Jesus’ disciples had a difficult time trying to grasp things Jesus said to them in parables, for instance.

At one point Jesus’ ask Jesus why he spoke in parables to them and our Lord’s response was amazing.

Here’s what our Lord said –

“To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. **12**For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.” – Matthew 13:11-12

In other words, it’s been given to you because you are believers and are receptive to the truth – more will be given.

But to those who don’t want to hear the Word, they will not receive it and be judged for it.

It wasn’t until the Spirit had been given to the disciples, that the Spirit would open the flood gates of understanding

to their hearts in much the same way you are receiving the Word of God now.

To put it simply, you are not alone because Christ has given to you the Holy Spirit to live in you forever.

**IV. The Joy of not Being Alone in Trouble (v.32)**

**John 16:32** *“Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”*

Here our Lord tells his disciples what is going to happen in advance.

Our Lord opens up the curtain of his sovereignty for his people to peak into so that they would know that although they were about to enter into a very dark valley,

that not even the gates of Hades will prevail against the church because he is in control over all things, including his betrayal and arrest and crucifixion.

Christian, no matter your circumstances

* Christ has already gone before you.
* Christ has already written your story.
* Christ foresaw your every fall.
* Christ saw every sin you would ever commit.
* Christ saw all of your backsliding.

Yet he fixed his heart upon you and saved you while you were yet a sinner – Christ died for you!

And when Christ saved you, he promised to not only change you, but to also finish the work he began in you.

Relying on the comfort of Christ beyond the troubles of this world also means that there is the…

**V. The Joy of Peace in Jesus because He Overcomes the World (v.33)**

**John 16:33** *“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”*

In conquering sin and death, what Christ accomplished for you at the Cross is access to God the Father as well as the spiritual reality that because Christ has overcome the world, so can we because we are “In Christ.”

Let’s pray

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, **25**to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, might, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” – Jude 24-25