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THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

SEEING JESUS

JOHN 16:16-33

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Final Discourse

1. Jesus' final conversation with the disciples before He is arrested and crucified
 - a) As the reality of the cross weighs heavily on this evening, the disciples become more and more consumed with anxiety and sorrow
 - b) They don't know exactly what is in store for them in the next 24 hours, Jesus had told them that He must leave, and where He was going, they couldn't come. He had told them that He was going to be arrested and that He would be killed, but that never really seemed to sink in
 - c) But now, in the darkness of this Friday evening, the sobering reality of what's to come begins to settle in – and the disciples are shaken
2. ***John 16:5 "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart."***
 - a) That word filled means that literally every other emotion has been pushed out – they are consumed with sorrow, it has taken over

B. Jesus wasn't trying to sow fear into the minds and hearts of the disciples

1. ***John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."***
2. ***John 16:1 "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble."***

C. What are these things that Jesus has spoken that their joy may remain full and that they should not be made to stumble?

1. Their relationship with Him
 - a) ***John 15:5 (NKJV): I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing***
2. Their relationship with one another
 - a) ***John 15:12–13 (NKJV): 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.***
3. Their relationship with the world
 - a) ***John 15:18–19 (NKJV): If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 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***

4. But we know how the stories goes. They do stumble! They are paralyzed by their fear and their sorrow and they scatter. They leave His side, and they hide.
 - a) What Jesus had taught them on this night seemed to have little to no effect.
 - b) Oh, but it would. Jesus was just planting seeds. He had been planting seeds throughout His time the disciples – seeds that would lie dormant until...let's not get too far ahead of ourselves

Joh 16:16 “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.” 17 Then some of His disciples said among themselves, “What is this that He says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” 18 They said therefore, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is saying.” 19 Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’? 20 Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. 23 “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

II. I GO TO THE FATHER

- A. This is a perfect example of Jesus' interactions with His disciples
 1. Jesus speaks and they do not understand, and they secretly discuss the meaning of His words
 - a) *“In a little while, you will not see Me; and again, a little while, and you will see Me”*
 2. Immediately we may assume that Jesus is referring to His death and resurrection – the disciples won't see Him for three days and then He will appear to them in the upper room
 - a) Let's read what He said again *“A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.”*
 3. Jesus ties seeing Him with “going to the Father” – remember context is key!
- B. What has Jesus been promising them?
 1. ***John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.***
 2. ***John 16:12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.***

- C. This is it! This is the key! This is what will wake up all of Jesus' teachings that lie dormant in the hearts and minds of the disciples
1. When I go to the Father, then you will see Me!
 2. **John 16:25 (NKJV): 25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.**
 3. We can be so hard on the disciples for missing so much but they were never going to truly see Jesus until they received supernatural vision!
 - a) The disciples were always fixated on the natural and missing the spiritual.
 - (1) There's not enough food, Jesus he stinks, Jesus you need to eat, Jesus, we're going to die
 - (2) They saw everything through natural eyes until they were indwelt by the Spirit of Christ Himself, that is when everything changed
 - b) That is when Jesus' words started to make sense – that is when they went from men cowering in an upper room to boldly proclaim the truth of the resurrected Christ – and rejoicing in the midst of any suffering that came because of it!
 - c) We get a hint of this in John 12 when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and John writes, His disciples did not understand these things – until Jesus ascended into Heaven and was glorified – then it all made sense

III. AN INTELLECTUAL OR A SPIRITUAL PURSUIT?

- A. Illumination is not purely an intellectual pursuit
1. You can have Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology memorized - you can have working knowledge of the original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic texts, - you can quote scripture like some people quote movies – and still look nothing like Jesus
 2. Still have no idea what Jesus is doing in the world today, still miss the heart of God
 3. Why? Because it is the Spirit of God that provides true understanding. It is the Spirit of God that allows us to see Jesus
 - a) **1 Cor 2:6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.**
 - b) Is growing in our understanding of God's Word important? Of course, it is! But our intellectual understanding is only the beginning

- c) My dad hates when people call concrete cement – cement is just the powder, it isn't until you add water that it becomes concrete
 - d) Must be born of the Spirit to see with Spiritual eyes, to comprehend things on a spiritual level – we have to walk in the Spirit to continue to see the deeper things of God or we will focus on the natural
- B. Jesus knows what the next few days are going to look like through natural eyes, from a human perspective
 - 1. I know you will weep and lament, and sorrow will push out every other emotion
 - 2. From your perspective life will look like utter chaos
 - a) But I am going to replace that sorrow with joy - This is the promise that is stitched throughout all of scripture for all believers
 - b) Isn't that what the Psalmist writes in Psalm 30 - Though the sorrow may last for a night, the joy comes in the morning
- C. What a perfect illustration Jesus uses. The miracle of childbirth
 - 1. I've been through or witnessed four of these
 - a) What a roller coaster of emotion - Full of screaming and crying and anguish, - and that was just me – Aaren was going through some stuff too
 - b) But the moment that little one is delivered for a moment time stands still, all eyes are on him, everyone is awe struck because they are in the presence of new life
 - 2. Think about what is in store for the disciples
 - a) I use this phrase carefully, but in a few hours it will seem as if all hell has broken loose
 - b) There will be screaming and crying and cursing – absolute anguish
 - c) They will witness the very worst of humanity – Jesus, the only perfect man who has ever lived, will be beaten and bloodied beyond recognition
 - d) Soldiers will drive 9 inch nails through each of His wrists and through His feet impaling Him to the cross
 - e) They will lift that cross up and there he will suffer and die
 - f) Once he has died they will jab a spear into his body and blood and water will flow, they will let take down His lifeless body from that cross, wrap him in cloth, just as He was wrapped as an infant, and lay him in a tomb
 - 3. All the disciples will be left with is a feeling of emptiness, a deep feeling of loss, utter sorrow
- D. Death and the earth would not be able to hold Jesus, just like a newborn baby entering the world, 3 days after Jesus was placed into a tomb new life entered the world – eternal life, a life where death has lost its sting

25 “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. 26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. 28 I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” 29 His disciples said to Him, “See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! 30 Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.” 31 Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? 32 Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me

you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

IV. POWER AND PROMISE

- A. Even after Jesus death and resurrection we see fear and confusion in the lives of the disciples
1. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus confused about the events that had just taken place, Thomas doubting the resurrection, and Peter is back on his fishing boat fishing
 2. ***Luke 24:36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." 37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." 40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."***
- B. I would content that this is when their joy was made full, when the power of Jesus' indwelling Spirit made His home inside them
1. It was at that moment that they saw Jesus. Their eyes were opened to all that He said and all the He had done. That solidified an unshakeable love and affection for the One who loved them first.
 2. ***Hebrews 13:6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"***
 - a) One aggressive enemy of joy is fear. What are we most afraid of? We are afraid of losing the things that are most valuable to us.
 - b) Fear of losing our job, our house, our car, our money, our friends
 - c) But if our prized possession is Jesus. He will never leave us nor forsake us. There's nothing man can do to take Him away from us.
 - d) You read of these martyrs who endured so much and never lost their joy because the thing they valued most couldn't be taken from them

C. *Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.*

1. That is the promise for the Spirit filled Christian who has seen Jesus
 - a) So have we really seen Jesus?
 - b) They disciples walked with Jesus for three years and but didn't really see until the Spirit or Christ filled them on the day of Pentecost.
 - (1) That is the comfort that our living Savior offers – trading an all-consuming sorrow for an all-consuming joy