

Peace

Good morning.

Today's passage is **John 16:16-33 (SLIDE Title & passage)** READ Title

If you need a bible raise hand...

While you're getting to the passage...:

1. We just wanted to thank you for patience and flexibility with entrances. Your positivity goes a long way and is reflective of your character.
2. My Teaching notes and supplemental notes are available on teaching tab of website. All the verses, citations, sources, etc.. **(SLIDE Sermon Notes)**

Pray: (Long Pause – Israel - Children)

Think back to a spiritual aha moment you had. PAUSE 26 years, Sheri & I were at Thom & Sues home bible study, **Rom 3:11**, made me soo mad, I spent 7 years on a philosophical journey to faith, believing that I could think my way into heaven *downplaying* trust. That sounds bizarre, but because of my emotional spiritual trust issues I very dramatically avoided trust. That's when I realized I had to trust God. There was no other way.

In today's passage the disciples have a huge "aha" moment .

We are in a five chapter section of John where Jesus is *preparing and equipping* the disciples to carry on Jesus' work after he returns to the Father in heaven. In the next 3 weeks of our study thru the end of John 17 we'll see that Jesus gives John the author and other disciples a plan that to not *just survive* but to *thrive as disciples in the face of evil and adversity*. And when that plan is implemented it results in Jesus' disciples having: sacrificial love for each other, hope, joy, peace, value, purpose, power, truth, and oneness. *(I wish all my plans resulted in that!)*

Starting in Ch 13 in the upper room, after the Passover meal Jesus told the disciples *he was leaving them* and returning to the Father. And immediately following he gave "the commandment" to "*Love each other*"

So far in this series we saw Jesus' plan for the disciples to include gifts that Jesus was leaving for his disciples to have in his absence. **(SLIDE – The Plan)** These are: The gift of sacrificially "*loving each other*" 13:34 and the loving community that creates. The gift of "*hope*" that they would be together again, "*dwell together forever*" 14:3; the gift of "*access to God the Father*" 14:6 to request help in carrying out His plan: The gift of *the Helper*" – who is the Holy Spirit.

In Ch 15 in the metaphor of Jesus being the True Vine, we saw how Jesus would prepare and equip the disciples to carry the commandment of loving each other as he loved them, the Gardener lifting, cleansing, pruning the branches, and by teaching them to abide in Jesus.

In 15:18-16:4 we saw Jesus give the gift of warning the disciples of what evil and adversity they would be facing in carrying out Jesus work.

Jesus told his disciples they would be treated *like Jesus their master* (SLIDE How the "Ruler of the World" treats Jesus' Disciples). They would be "hated" 15:18, "persecuted" 15:20, "rejected" 15:21, "expelled" and "killed" 16:2.

Jesus then told the disciples the reason he warned them, because he expects his disciples to "testify" about him and "not abandon their faith" in Jesus (15:27, 16:1 one slide) when the ruler of the world turns the heat up on them. PAUSE Note: Jesus always equips and resource his disciples to carry out instructions and commandments he gives them. So just as Jesus equipped the disciples to love each other sacrificially by "pruning, cleansing and abiding", in like manner Jesus prepares and equips the disciples for "testifying about Jesus and not abandoning Jesus" by giving them the gift of the Advocate – the Spirit of Truth within them.

Last week we saw that the Advocate – the Spirit of Truth within them would, not only help them to testify and not abandon their faith in Jesus, but would thru them 16:8 READ "convict the world of sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgement".

In today's passage Jesus makes available for disciples the gifts of supernatural lasting joy and peace.

John 16:16-18 READ

Jesus introduces the next part of his conversation with what appears to be something like a riddle. A "riddle" defined as: (SLIDE riddle) a statement having a veiled meaning put forth as a puzzle to be solved. Our modern idea of riddles are more like brain teasers for entertainment. Riddles in first century were a common modality used by Jewish rabbis for teaching truth. The veiled meaning, similar to parables, would create lively engagement and discussion, and cause the listener to ponder and meditate on, sometimes pondering only briefly and sometimes for life. This follows the overall pattern of the bible that it was written for meditation and discovery. I personally enjoy riddles, and sometimes they really irritate my brain.

READ v16 again. So how do we solve this riddle? If you look at this verse by itself, without any context, there could be many answers to this riddle. 16:16 READ That

could be as simple as someone closing a door on someone, then a little while later opening the door. Or it could be someone on a boring zoom meeting “getting up and going to the bathroom” and coming back a short while later”. However, any answer to this riddle must be based on “seeing” the person speaking, then “not seeing” the person speaking, and then later “seeing” the person speaking again.

Unlike our modern riddles, there is context here that *informs* the disciples and readers. First there is a previous verse in John’s gospel where Jesus used similar language. **14:19 (hi lite “see me”2x). READ.** The common interpretation of that verse is that after Jesus returns to the Father and sends the Holy Spirit, the disciples will be able to “see Jesus” in themselves and others, because they know Jesus, but the world won’t be able to see Jesus or recognize his works. Will come back to this verse in a bit – hold onto it.

The 2nd piece of context is in **16:16** - we know that the person who spoke this riddle is Jesus, who spoke it to *his disciples*. So in v16, it’s the disciples who *see* Jesus, and then *won’t see* Jesus, and then later *will see* Jesus. Is the listener here only the 11 disciples present or does it include disciples of all time including us?

Jesus and the disciples are headed to the Garden of Gethsemane when he makes this puzzling statement to them. In my mind I see Jesus make this statement and then just silence from him,... maybe minutes. Tick tock, tick tock. The disciples all start side baring, unclear of the what Jesus means, trying to figure this statement out, and Jesus just lets them sit with his statement.

And note here, the disciples add something else into their question that wasn’t in Jesus statement in v16 but was from earlier on in the conversation. **V17a,c** “*and What does he mean when he says...I am going to the Father?*”

In **v19a READ** “*Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it*”... so maybe he saw them discussing with each other, saw their puzzled expressions, and then he asks them a question.

V19b “*are you asking yourselves what I meant?*” And instead of directly answering them in **v20** Jesus gives the disciples more context to the riddle of what they will *emotionally experience* when “*in a little while they will no longer see him anymore*”. **READ.**

Now these disciples don’t know or understand all of what they will witness in the next 24 hours, so Jesus warns them what their emotional reaction will be: “*weep and mourn*”. In their culture this was not quiet grievingthis was loud and social. The Greek word here means “wail”. **(SLIDE disciples grieving)** So picture the 12, and maybe the other disciples not included in the 12, “wailing” together over what they witness happens to

their master and teacher – Jesus.

But Jesus point is not their emotional response but rather the contrast of *responses* between how the *disciples* respond to their master being killed and how *the world* responds to Jesus being killed. The middle of **v20b** says “..*the world will rejoice*”? Reminder, the word “world” in all of John’s writings means the people living in spiritual darkness in a world system under the rule of Satan, who have not surrendered to the will of the Father. The *human* rulers of the world in this context are the religious leaders, who think they are serving God, when in fact they are under the power of the *real* Ruler of the World, Satan. Think marionettes. **(SLIDE marionettes)**. Jesus is both the enemy of the religious leaders and the enemy of Satan and his demonic forces.. thus they both rejoice at his death. They rejoice because they wrongly conclude that Jesus is dead and no longer a threat to their evil power and kingdoms.

But that is not the end of the story is it? The end of **v20c** says “*You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy*”.

Jesus’ *emphasis* here is the disciples grief “*suddenly turning*” to “*wonderful joy*”.

And to emphasize the *suddenness* of that transformation Jesus uses the analogy of a mother birthing a child. **V21 READ**

We experienced the joy of my first son Korin, being born. My brother tells me I did a cartwheel outside of the birthing room, I don’t remember that. We had weeks of premature labor, and then when Sheri did finally go into labor 12 days late, and it was instant hard labor. She did great, I almost fainted. Anguish, pain, apprehension and struggle suddenly turned to *so much joy*. **(SLIDE baby Korin)**.

2000 years ago the disciples may have heard this analogy from Jesus a little differently then we do now. Yes its face value meaning is the “suddenness of transformation” from anguish to joy.

However, in old testament prophetic writings, pregnancy and childbirth were used as a prophetic analogy. The commentator Keeners said “*often times the prophets use these birth pangs to signify the pangs of a new messianic era.*” **Micah 5:2-5** captures this. **READ.** (Keener, IVP BBC pg 304).

So Jesus’ statement here to the disciples is both speaking of their future sudden transformation from anguish to joy, and he is referencing pangs that come before a *new messianic era* that he ushers in.

Jesus then continues speaking figuratively in **v22 READ.**

Jesus initially doesn’t indicate what it is that causes the sudden change from “*anguish to joy*”, or what ushers in the new messianic era, but rather he first focuses on a *unique quality of joy* – joy that “*no one can rob you of*”. This seems to be referring to a joy

that is not affected by circumstances, meaning a joy *that will not change*. They could have joy in their day over the birth of a child but the joy is replaced by grief if the child dies. See that joy was not lasting. Jesus seems to be speaking here of a joy that has an “unchanging quality” to it that “*no one can rob you of*”. A joy that is reflective of the unchanging quality of God’s character – the “I AM.”

And in context “who” the “*no one who can rob you of your joy*” is probably referencing the “ruler of the world” who will bring evil and adversity against the disciples, and even kill most of them. PAUSE But Jesus words here must mean then that the sorrow of loss, and the experience of persecution, and the threat of death, cannot rob them of this lasting joy that Jesus *makes available* to his disciples in just a few short days.

If you have read the rest of this chapter you will know that Jesus doesn’t come out and tell the disciples clearly what the source of this lasting joy is,... other *than* the “joy happening” hinges on Jesus returning to the Father. What happens between this point hours before Jesus is seized and arrested and when Jesus returns to the Father are all steps that must happen *in order for* Jesus to return to the Father. And they are all steps that *must happen* in order for the disciples to be given what Jesus wants them to have in his physical absence especially to have this joy “*that no one can rob you of*”.

Many of us as readers know the narrative and the end of the story, but the disciples in John 16 are “*living it*” as it unfolds without understanding what comes next. For the disciples they are going to witness their master be arrested and tried and wrongly convicted. They will witness, in horror and disbelief, their master be tortured and killed on a cross. Some of them are going to watch his body be taken down from the cross, and put in a rich mans grave. And if they hadn’t started already they are going to mourn and wail, and be in hiding for about 40 hours... Then early morning on the 3rd day Jesus will rise from the dead, and soon after that appear to them. Their **(v20b)** “*grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy.*” I imagine uncontrollable tears of grief becoming uncontrollable tears of joy. PAUSE

So is that the answer to the riddle? ...It *seems* to fit doesn’t it? They “*see him*”, and then “*don’t see him*”, and then a little while after that, they “*see him again*”. **(v16)**

See the tendency is to solve the veiled meaning of this riddle in v16 with the “life, death/burial, and resurrection” of Jesus. **(SLIDE John 16:16 Timeline)** It even fits the “*your grief will turn to wonderful joy*” part in **16:20b**. PAUSE

FF Bruce says this: “*We should not imagine too quickly that we understand what was so unintelligible to the disciples.*” (Bruce, The Gospel and Epistles of John, pg. 321)
I love the humility of that comment!

Jesus life, death/burial and resurrection is the first answer for the disciples he was

speaking to *in person*, that does fit the riddle. But two considerations here: If Jesus is speaking to a broader audience of disciples then just the remaining 11 disciples, meaning all of us, well then that doesn't really work. I didn't watch Jesus die, then grieve, then be suddenly be joyful when he resurrected. I wasn't there! See my point? And 2nd consideration: does the answer of the life, death/burial and rez fit the context of the conversation Jesus was having with the disciples since the end of Ch13? Remember *context informs the interpretation*.

From my perspective that context seems to point to v16 having an *additional or broader* interpretation. Yes, the life, death/burial, and resurrection of Jesus is the first answer to the riddle for the 11 disciples present, but in light of all that Jesus has been communicating since Ch 13 it may also point to another "you see me, you don't, you see me again" scenario. Let me show you.

Look at the first verse of John's gospel **John 1:1. (hi lite "with God.") READ**
Answer this question: "Where" was Jesus "*in the beginning*"? "...with God".

Then "*where*" did Jesus *go*? John the author tells us in **John 1:10, 14. (hi lite "into the world", hilite "made his home") READ.** Jesus came into the world (world meaning people, groups of people, all under the ruler of the world, Satan). And v14 tells us "*he made his home among us*", or "dwelt among us".

Then.. Jesus, dwelling in the world among people he loved, started telling his followers that *he was leaving* them. **John 13:33 READ** "*Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer*".

In **John 14:2 (hilite "my Father's house")** Jesus specifies where he is going, "my Father's house"

Jesus makes it more clear in **14:12b, (hi lite "going to be with the Father")**

But after both verse 2 and 12 where he tells them he is "*leaving*" and "*going to the Father*", he tells them he "*will come back*" for them. **14:3, 18, 28 (hi lite "I will come"3x)** The common interpretation of "*I will come back*" in 14:3, 18, 28 is this "coming back" is after Jesus goes back to "his Father's house" prepares a place for them, and then returns for his bride.

So Jesus is dwelling *with them*, then he is *not with* them, then he is *with them* again. That fits the riddle as well, doesn't it? **(16:16)** They see him, then don't see him, then they see him again. And all of the *grief and anguish* of life will suddenly be transformed into joy? **(SLIDE John 26:16 Timeline w v28)**

So which is it? I think both, but you decide.

There is also strong support that it also refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit. You can

read all about that in the supplemental notes. **(SLIDE Sermon Notes)**

The focus on John 13 -17 has been on Jesus preparing and equipping his disciples for his *departure*. And the gifts that he gives them are hinged on Jesus *returning* to the Father.

When Jesus left the Father and obediently came to this world, lived among us, died for our sins, rose from the grave and returned to the Father, he gave us the Gift of Hope that he would come back for us and we would someday dwell with him forever. And Jesus returning to the Father, gave us the gift of the Advocate who would live in us and never leave us, abide in us, and be our Comforter, Encourager, Counselor, Assistant, Strengthener, and Helper. Who would teach us everything related to Jesus, remind us of Jesus words, make it possible for us to “abide with Jesus because his Spirit is in us”, testify about Jesus, convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement, guide us into all truth and tell us about the future. And gave us “joy that no one can rob us of”. That all happens because Jesus came from the Father into our world, lived among us, died for our sins, rose from the grave, and returned to the Father. Full Circle.

So let me tie this all back in to the two gifts Jesus wanted his disciples to have: lasting joy & peace. What this scripture tells us about this joy is that it comes “*suddenly*” after anguish and grief, and that it is a joy that “*no one can rob them of*”. For us disciples in the present, this is joy that comes from the fear of death being eliminated. The author of Hebrews wrote **Heb 13:6 NIV READ**. “*what can mere mortals do to me*”. This is a joy that also comes from the abiding presence of God’s spirit within us, it comes from us “abiding” in Christ. This joy comes from his Spirit teaching us and transforming us. And **v23-24** tell us that we will have “*abundant joy*” because we “*ask the Father directly*” and “*ask using Jesus name*”. **READ**

This first statement is ambiguous I’m not sure all that it means. Overall though the gist of this fits in with the context that God the Father wanted to have a relationship with His creation, us, which is why *He went looking* for Adam & Eve in the garden after they sinned, and why *He moved* into the tabernacle holy of holies that Moses built – so he could be among the people he loved. Where God dwelt in the holy of holies was separated from his people by a veil because of the sin or unrighteousness of the people. What God ultimately wanted then was for the sin barrier between man and God to be removed by Jesus so that man and God could dwell together. When Jesus died on the cross paying for all sin, the veil of the temple was torn in two.

After God sent the Holy Spirit to live in us, we in essence became God’s temple. This opened up access for common man, you and I, with sins paid for by Jesus, having access to God the Father. **Heb 10:19-22b (hilite “boldly enter” “go right into”)** describes it this way. **READ**. How do we have access to the Father? Jesus. And thus when we pray, we always pray *in Jesus name*. “Jesus name” is like a hotel key card that allows you into God’s presence. It’s the only way to the Father.. Jesus said that right? in **(14:6)**

"I am the way...no one comes except thru me".

So in our passage today Jesus says in v23 *"...you will ask the Father directly (because we now have access to the Father) and he will grant your request, because you use my name."* As we learned in **14:13** that uses very similar language to our passage, this is not an open promise about asking for anything, rather if we are asking for something in Jesus name, with heart submitted to whatever answer brings God the most Glory, then God will grant it. **READ**

For example, if you as a follower of Jesus, have an illness or ailment (and most of us do), and you ask in Jesus name, Jesus would want your prayer to be, "Father please heal me from this illness." "However if me having this illness brings you more glory, then so be it" - Regardless of the outcome. In other words, the anthem of our heart should be, "if my life can bring you glory so be it, if my death brings you more glory so be it." What you and I ask for in Jesus name should be filtered thru *surrender* to what would bring God the most glory. This surrender leads to joy and peace. In my experience, yes God at times does heal, and those times are cool and have a wow factor and build faith, but more often than not God gives the grace to endure and stay faithful and He transforms us thru the illness or hardship, regardless if it ends in death. Why? Because in those scenarios that brings him more glory. In other words if more eyes look to God and go "wow" and their faith is strengthened because he sustained someone thru hardship vs Him doing an immediate healing, than that's what God will do. He determines it. Here is my current thinking on this, I say this cautiously: For the most part, God heals us from sin, and sustains and transforms us thru hardship. And.. When we are surrendered to whatever brings God the most glory, then we can have amazing peace. We will talk about that peace in a minute.

The end of v24 it's the *access to the Father*, asking *in Jesus name*, that brings *"abundant joy"*.

READ v25-27

In v25 the words "figures of speech" in the Greek has a sense of "obscure language" as in it has a "veiled or hidden meaning". And the word commonly translated as "plainly" is more about "speaking openly about what was once veiled or hidden".

V26 -27 seems to indicate that once we trust in Jesus, and understand and experience the depth of God's love for us, then we are *much more willing* to ask in Jesus name surrendered to whatever brings God more glory. And because the Father *"loves us dearly"* he then answers the prayer in however way brings him more glory.

In **v28** we see the full circle of Jesus earthly ministry, and notice here how *plainly* Jesus speaks. No riddles, no parables, no figures of speech. **READ.**

And this is the point where the disciples finally get it in part, where they have a spiritual

“aha moment”. **V29-30 READ** I think it’s cute that they believe that the reason they didn’t understand was because Jesus was using veiled speech like riddles. That is so Duane, to think that the other person’s lack of clear communication is the reason I don’t understand something. In their case, the riddles and parables were used to *bring them* to understanding of truth, as they meditated and discussed and wrestled with it. And what it is that they finally understand and accept is that Jesus is who he says he is because He came from God. A prophet or teacher *is sent* from God, Jesus *came from* God. Meaning he is God, “*the Son of God, Messiah, and that by believing in him you can have life by the power of his name*” **(20:31)**.

In **v30** Jesus teaches a powerful life lesson for all believers. That your conviction and belief in truth alone is not enough to walk you thru the fires of persecution and hardship. **READ**

We know from **Mark 14:50** that what Jesus prophesies does in fact happen. **READ**. Rather what all disciples need in addition to their secure belief in Christ, in order to be able to walk thru hardship and persecution, is the Holy Spirit in them, which they receive because Jesus *returned to the Father*. This is what Jesus was teaching earlier in the evening to the disciples in John 14 and John 16. That when persecution and hardship does come, because we have the Holy Spirit within in us, we don’t abandon our faith, walk away from Jesus, and stop testifying about him in a world under the power of Satan. It’s the Spirit - the Advocate, Comforter, Encourager, Counselor, Strengthener, Assistant, and Helper, that teaches us, transforms us, strengthens us, and testifies *thru us* about Jesus. We need Gods Spirit. Aka “Don’t try this on your own”.

And in **v33** Jesus gives them *one more gift* to prepare and equip them, the supernatural gift of peace – How? Because Jesus has overcome the world. **READ** This verse can be confusing to us living in the present in a world controlled by evil and Satan. The victory that we experience here in the present is because Jesus overcame the “most powerful tool” Satan and his systems have over mankind – death. Jesus’ victory over sin and death , securing our eternal life with God, gives us victory over the death and the fear of death. Read this with me, **I Cor 15:54b-55** “*Death is swallowed...*”

With sin and death conquered I can live without fear of death. With God’s Spirit within me, abiding in me, I will never be separate from the power of God, the love of God, the truth of God, the abiding presence of God, regardless of life’s hardship, persecution, trials and sorrows. Amen?

Supplemental Notes John 16:16-33

This passage represents a tension between past, present and future fulfillment of prophecy.

V16. Jesus uses the same phrase “see me” in 14:19 ...soon the world will no longer see me but you will see me.

V17. What Jesus models here is actually a really good teaching technique. That is to let students sit with the problem for a while, and let them come up with answers before

teaching the answer. Its why teaching that involves discussion has a higher retention rate than straight lecturing. And its why even in a lecture format like Sunday mornings, I ask a lot of questions of the audience without expecting them to answer out loud, hoping the question will engage them in thinking thru possible scenarios.

John 1:14 The word “dwelt” is of the same root word as “dwelling place” and “abide” that we covered in Ch 14 & 15. And when he “dwelt among us” Jesus’ primary work centered around this verse **John 6:29**

V19 “Are you asking yourselves what I mean?” Step back here to a broader picture. Jesus’ question to them will shape for the rest of their lives how they engage with *all* the words Jesus spoke, not just the words he spoke in v16. Jesus wants his disciples to engage with *all his words* with this question, “What did Jesus mean?” This is in supported by what Jesus says of the Holy Spirit in **14:26b** “...He will remind you of *everything I have told you*”. And it’s in part why we have four unique accounts of the life of Jesus. So that we as disciples can sit with his words, and meditate on his words, ponder his words, discuss his words, and allow Jesus’ words, and Jesus *as the Word*, to transform our minds and hearts and actions to His image. After all he is the Master and we are the disciples. Amen?

Also, according to Luke’s account the disciples have been told what they will witness, but don’t understand it. **Luke 18:31-34 READ**

V21 on labor and childbirth: For the 1st century disciples the analogy of labor and childbirth almost meant a high risk of losing your wife. Women often died in childbirth. Rachel, Jacob’s wife died in childbirth. Eli’s daughter in law, Phinehas wife – died in childbirth

So what is the answer to the riddle?

One more support for v16 also referring to Jesus returning to the father is in **16:17**. When the disciples are asking each other what Jesus meant, they pair two questions together. What does he mean by “you won’t see me, then you will see me? And what does he mean by “going to the Father”? This may support that they understood it as one event.

Could the v16 also be referencing the coming of the Holy Spirit? Could it also mean the “Spirit of Jesus” as in the Holy Spirit, being sent to live permanently in the disciples of Jesus and that’s who the phrase, “after a little while you will me see again” is referring too? After all Jesus did say in **14:23** “*we will come*”. That one makes my head hurt a bit. I don’t claim to understand the trinity – I just accept that there is one God who is made up of 3 different persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. 100% One God, 100% 3 persons. Its beyond my ability to compute. This 3rd interpretation of Jesus coming to live inside us would help then explain the previous time Jesus used the “not

see me, then will see me” language from **14:19**. After Jesus returns to the Father and sends the Holy Spirit the disciples will be able to “see Jesus” in themselves and others, because they know Jesus and he “abides in them”, but the world won’t be able to “see” Jesus or recognize his works.

V25 Note: what Jesus wants to speak openly to them about is *all about* the “Father”. For Jesus It’s all about the Father!

V28. NET Bible Note: “The statement *I am leaving the world and going to the Father* is a summary of the entire Gospel of John. It summarizes the earthly career of the Word made flesh, Jesus of Nazareth, on his mission from the Father to be the Savior of the world, beginning with his entry into the world as he came forth from God and concluding with his departure from the world as he returned to the Father.”

<https://netbible.org/bible/John+16>