

Bible Fellowship Teaching Plan for John 16:16-24 (August 9, 2026)
From Sorrow to Joy: Trusting Christ When We Don't Understand

Central Truth: When we can't seem to understand God's timing or His purposes, we can trust the Lord Jesus, knowing that temporary sorrow gives way to permanent joy through His resurrection, His presence, and His promises.

John's purpose (20:31): "These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Key Passage (20): "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy."

Opening Question: Think of a time when something that seemed like a great disappointment at first later became one of God's greatest blessings in your life.

Lesson Objectives: 1) understand why the disciples struggled to comprehend Jesus' words about His departure and return; 2) recognize that God's timing often differs from our expectations, but His purposes are always perfect; 3) learn how abiding in Christ leads to confident prayer and enduring joy regardless of life's circumstances.

Background: Jesus and His disciples have left the Upper Room and are on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane where He would be betrayed and

arrested. Along the way, He prepares His disciples for what's about to happen. Although He's assured them of the work of the Holy Spirit, they're still confused.

I. Jesus Prepares His Disciples for His departure and Assures Them That They Will See Him Again (16)

- A. They would not see Him for "a little while"
- B. Then, after "a little while," they would see Him again

II. Faith Trusts Christ Even When We Don't Understand His Timing (17-19)

- A. The disciples focused on the timing rather than the Person
 - 1. They could have asked for clarification about the coming Holy Spirit, abiding in Christ, bearing fruit, loving one another, persecution, or any other aspect of Christ's mission
 - 2. But they became preoccupied with the meaning of "a little while."

Application: We also tend to focus on things of lesser importance. We want to know when? How long? Why now? but Jesus continually directs us back to Himself rather than satisfying every curiosity.

- B. Jesus knew their confusion before they spoke; He knew their hearts as He knows ours

Application: The Lord Jesus still knows, our fears, our doubts, our unanswered questions, our hidden burdens--there's nothing He doesn't know about us, and yet He still loves us.

Questions for Reflection

What unanswered “Why?” questions am I presently carrying that I need to entrust to the Lord?

Am I more concerned about God’s timetable than knowing Him?

III. Their Temporary Sorrow Will Be Transformed Into Lasting Joy (20)

A. Jesus honestly prepares them for suffering: “you will weep and lament”

B. The world would celebrate His death.

1. The Pharisees would rejoice that the exposure of their fraudulent righteousness has ended
2. The Sadducees would be glad He’s not talking about eternal things
3. The Roman leaders would be happy that He’s not stirring up the people any longer.
4. The people in general would be thankful that another messianic uprising has been crushed so they can return to business as usual under their Roman oppressors

C. But their sorrow would be transformed into joy: the resurrection would completely reverse everything.

1. What appeared to be defeat, failure, and hopelessness would become victory, redemption, and eternal life
2. 2 Corinthians 4:13: “This slight, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison”

Application: God often does His greatest work during what appears to be our darkest hour.

Questions for Reflection

1. How have I experienced God bringing blessing out of disappointment?
2. When am I tempted to believe that my present sorrow is not going to change?
3. What difference does the resurrection make as I face today's trials?

III. God Often Uses Pain to Produce Great Joy (21-22)

A. An illustration from childbirth

1. Labor involves pain, waiting, uncertainty
2. Yet those pains are set aside when a new life arrives

B. The application: Calvary's suffering would soon give birth to resurrection joy

1. He will see them again, and their hearts will rejoice
2. Their joy will be everlasting, and nothing can take it away

Principle: Christian joy rests upon an empty tomb and a resurrected Lord--not on favorable circumstances.

Questions for Reflection

1. What "labor pains" might I be experiencing in my life right now?
2. Is my joy rooted more in circumstances or in Christ?
3. How does the certainty of Christ's resurrection transform my perspective?

IV. The Lord Jesus Invites His Followers to Access the Father and the Fullness of Joy (23-24)

A. Because Jesus is going to the Father. He won't be around to answer their questions.

B. But they will have access to the Father through the Holy Spirit as they ask in Jesus' Name

1. "In Jesus' Name" is not a magical incantation
2. Praying in Jesus' Name means praying according to His character and purpose as one who has submitted himself or herself to Jesus as Lord
3. It's not a formula, a closing phrase, or a magical expression. It means communicating with God
 - a. as you abide in Christ
 - b. according to His Word
 - c. as you seeking His purposes
 - d. and submit yourself to His will.

C. God's goal for us--His purpose for us--is the fullness of our joy

1. Jesus speaks of joy four times in these five verses
2. Notice the progression: Christ reveals Himself; faith grows; prayer deepens; joy increases.
3. "Bring your desires into harmony with God's, and you will have none unsatisfied amongst them; and so you will be blessed to the full; and though sorrow comes, as of course it will come, still you may be blessed."

Questions for Reflection

1. How would my prayers change if my greatest desire were God's will rather than my own?
2. Do my prayers flow from an abiding fellowship with Christ or am I merely asking for stuff and solutions?

3. Is my prayer life increasing my joy in Christ?

V. Recap: The Resurrection Changes Everything

A. The disciples' sorrow lasted only “a little while”

1. Friday looked like defeat.
2. Sunday revealed victory.
3. Everything changed because Jesus lives.

B. Their future ministry reflected this joy

1. After Pentecost, they preached boldly, they suffered joyfully, they worshiped continually, they prayed confidently, and they proclaimed Christ fearlessly.
2. The same frightened disciples became courageous witnesses because they had seen the risen Lord.

C. Our hope is the same.

1. Like the disciples, our present suffering is temporary
2. Temporary sorrow can't be compared with eternal joy

Key Truths

1. Jesus knows our cares and confusion before we voice them
2. He's never surprised or deterred by our doubts.
3. God's delays are never God's denials
4. His timing is always perfect, even when we can't understand
5. Joy grows through trusting Christ
6. Understanding often comes later; faith comes first

Personal Applications

1. Trust Christ when His timing is unclear: instead of demanding explanations, choose to trust His character. Ask, “Lord, help me trust You while I wait.”
2. Remember that all sorrow is temporary. Whatever grief you are experiencing today, the Lord reminds you, “A little while....” For every believer, suffering has an expiration date.
3. Let the resurrection reshape your perspective. Because Christ lives, there is always hope beyond today's disappointment.
4. Deepen your prayer life: pray with confidence because you have access to the Father through Christ. Seek His will before asking for your own.
5. Live as a joyful witness. The world expects Christians to be discouraged by suffering. Instead, demonstrate the unshakable joy that only the risen Christ can give.

Closing Challenge: Jesus never promised His followers a life without sorrow. He promised something infinitely greater: that every sorrow surrendered to Him would ultimately be transformed into joy through His resurrection, His presence, and His eternal purposes.

Closing Question: Will I trust Christ during my “little while,” trusting and believing that He is preparing a joy that no one can ever take away?

Sunday School Lesson for August 9, 2026
John 16:16-24

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallahassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, in our current study, we've been discovering how John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, reveals the life and ministry of the Lord "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

On this second Sunday in August, as we see that purpose played out in every word on every page of this precious book, John has invited us to join him and the other disciples as they follow Jesus on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. In our text for today, found in chapter sixteen, verses sixteen through 24, the Lord is nearing the end of His final words to His disciples as He prepares them for what's about to happen in the next few hours. And what a roller-coaster conversation it's been.

Chapter thirteen began with the disciples eating the Passover meal in Upper Room. John tells us that Jesus washed the disciples' feet and wiped them with the towel that was wrapped around him, as a picture of what He wanted them to do--not necessarily washing each other's feet, but serving one another in the humility and service like washing each other's feet.

As they're trying to figure out what He's just done and told them to do, His mood changes, and He tells them that one of them will betray Him. In the confusion, each one asks, "Is it I?" Peter gets John to ask who it is, and Jesus tells him: "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." Judas is the recipient of the bread. John alone hears Jesus tell him, "What you do, do quickly," and Judas leaves the room to finalize the plans for the Lord's arrest.

With Judas gone, the mood changes once again as Jesus is free to speak openly to them about what's about to happen. After Jesus reminds them again

to love one another, Peter wants to know where He's going, and although he assures the Lord that he's ready to follow Him wherever he goes, even to the point of laying down his life, Jesus shocks him with the revelation that the rooster would not crow until he--Peter--had denied the Lord three times.

When Jesus returns to talking about going away, the disciples are dumbfounded. Although He had told them that He was returning to the Father Who had sent Him, Thomas voiced the question they all had in their minds: "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Even though the Lord reassured them that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, they still didn't understand, so Jesus tells them that their love for Him would give them confidence and hope, even when they couldn't figure it all out.

Then, to illustrate how their love for Him was the binding agent to the vital unity that would give them hope and confidence in the hours and days ahead, He tells them He is the vine and they are the branches, and that, as they are inseparably, vitally, inextricably connected to Him, they will produce the fruit that God intends for them to produce. "By this," He says, "my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

And, once again, He urges them to love one another as He has loved them, applying the picture of the vine and its branches to the interconnectedness that should mark their own lives. But even as He calls them to love one another, He warns them that the world will hate them: "They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God." But He assures them by explaining that He's telling them these things before they happen so they'll remember when those things do happen that this is what Jesus said was going to happen. It wouldn't take Him and it shouldn't take them by surprise.

In spite of all their confusion, He was telling them, "God's got this. Don't let your hearts be troubled, and don't be afraid. Love one another. If you love

me, you'll keep My commandments." "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

Then, just before our focal text for today, the Lord tells them in chapter sixteen, verse fifteen: "All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." "All the fullness of His being, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all the power, all the radiance of the glory of the Father, of the human race, and of all things, are mine." If there were any question in their minds that God's plan is faultlessly and perfectly unfolding before them--even in the midst of their confusion and fear--this should have put every doubt to rest.

But, before the Holy Spirit can fulfill His work in their hearts, a painful separation is necessary. Already, He's told them several times--as far back as His last message to the people gathered in the Temple--that He's going away, and the people then were bewildered--baffled--by His words that made no sense to them, especially since they were expecting a Messiah who would deliver them from their oppression under the Romans.

But even here in chapter sixteen, verse sixteen, the disciples still have a sense of confusion and bewilderment as the Lord tells them, "A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me." That first "little while" that Jesus speaks of is less than a day away. In just a few hours, He would be betrayed, arrested, brought to appear before the Jewish leaders and Roman officials, and be sentenced to die. Laid in a tomb less than 24 hours from the moment He spoke these words, they would not see Him. All of them, except John it appears, would run away and hide, His body would be placed in a borrowed tomb, and a stone rolled in place to seal the opening. For all intents and purposes and, as far as they would know, that would be the end.

But it wouldn't be the end. In another "little while," they would see Him again. Friday evening, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning--three days--actually, parts of three days later, He would rise from the dead and appear to them again. And how many times had He told them that already? Five times as recorded by Matthew and Mark, and He even showed how His resurrection was illustrated in the events of Jonah's sea voyage gone wrong. Matthew, chapter twelve, verse 39: "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Throughout this conversation that John records for us, now in its third chapter--although John didn't write in chapters--those divisions came about long afterwards--throughout this conversation, the disciples have interrupted Jesus several times. But not lately. They've been silent while the Lord since Judas--not Iscariot--asked Him back in chapter 14, verse 22, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"

Since then, He's told them about how "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him;" when the Holy Spirit comes, "he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you;" "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser;" "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends;" "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends;" "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide," "The [Jewish leaders are going to] put you out of the synagogues" and "whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God." All this and so much more, but John never says they stopped Him to ask a question about any of it.

But now, they've got questions--verse seventeen: "So some of his disciples said to one another, '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

am going to the Father?”” So they were saying, ‘What does he mean by “a little while?”’ We do not know what he is talking about.’” When He talked about leaving just a moment ago in verse five, He said that no one stopped Him to ask, “Where are you going?” The truths that He had been sharing with them seemed to have gone right over their heads, but now, as He talks about “a little while” and another “little while,” their ears perk up, and they want to know more.

Not much has changed since then. There’s so much the Lord wants us to know about Him, but there’s a lot of people more interested in getting the times right than they are getting the gospel right. But it’s not new. Mark tells us that when the disciples marveled at the beauty of the Temple, Jesus told them it would all be destroyed. When they heard this shocking news, they wanted to know when it would take place. And how many models and theories and speculations and timelines have people come up with since then at the expense of communicating the gospel to a lost and dying world?

The message of Christ to the world isn’t about when, it’s about Who: “Who is Jesus?” “Who is the one Mediator between us and God?” “Who can pay my sin debt?” “Who can save me from my sin?” If we get the “Who?” right, we can be sure He’ll take care of the “when.” Jesus’ response to the disciples takes up two chapters in Matthew’s gospel, but Mark record the Lord’s summation in verse 33 of his chapter thirteen: “Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.”

Of all the things they could have asked about, why did they choose a question about time to stop Him for an explanation? Yes, it was helpful for them to be aware of how long it would be before they would see Him again, but the timing of these events was so overshadowed by all the other things the Lord has been talking about. There was so much more they could have asked about; instead, they latched onto this minor bit of information about time and wanted to know what “a little while” meant.

Alexander MacLaren offers the following illustration: “What would you think of a man in a fire who, when they brought the fire-escape [ladder] to him, said, ‘I decline to trust myself to it, until you first of all explain to me the principles of its construction; and, secondly, tell me all about who made it; and, thirdly, inform me where all the materials of which it is made came from?’ But that is very much what a number of people are doing to-day in reference to ‘the Gospel of our salvation,’ when they demand that the small questions--on which the central [truth of the gospel] does not at all depend--shall be answered and settled before they [place their faith in it].”

On the other hand, if they were still holding onto the nationalistic idea of a restored Israel freed from Roman domination, their question could have referred to His departure and return; in other words, they might have been thinking, “If He’s about to establish an earthly kingdom, why would He leave. If He’s not going to establish an earthly kingdom, why would He come back?” Either way, John recognizes that their focus is on the word, “little while.”

Of all the times Jesus’ patience and forbearance had been tested, this could have been one of the worst, but what does John tell us in verse nineteen?

“Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, ‘Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, “A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me?”’”

“Jesus knew what they wanted to ask Him.” John has told us that Jesus had the ability to know what people were thinking since chapter two of his gospel. After clearing out the Temple, John tells us in chapter two, verse 23 that “many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.” This knowledge on Jesus’ part is proof of His deity, that He is God Who knows all things, even the hidden secrets of the heart.

John's words should be a great encouragement to us today as he recognized the Lord's ability to know what was troubling them and causing them to be confused. God has searched us, and He knows us. He knows. There's absolutely nothing about me and you that He doesn't know. God knows us--our guilt, our innocence; our brokenness, our grief; our dreams, our nightmares; our past, our present, our future--everything we've said and done and even thought, and everything we should have said or done or thought and didn't--our greatest hopes and our deepest fears. He knows it all--and He loves us with an everlasting, unfailing, unconditional love just the same.

And He demonstrated that love to His disciples by addressing the very thing that troubled them most in that moment: "He said to them, 'Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, "A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me?"'" He wasn't speculating, and He wasn't asking them to tell Him if He had guessed correctly. He knew, but I imagine that He wanted them to consider their question in light of all the other, far more important things He had been sharing with them.

So, He answers their whispered question--verse twenty: "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy." He didn't rebuke them outright for being so slow to understand what He had been telling them for so long. He could have told them as He would tell the two on the road to Emmaus, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe!" but He didn't. He does chide them, though: "Is this what you are asking [among] yourselves?"

On several occasions they had pooled their ignorance in response to a question Jesus had asked or to something they had witnessed, as in the time they weren't well received in a Samaritan village through which they were traveling, and James and John asked, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Now, instead of asking Him, they're trying to figure it out on their own.

With patience and grace, the Lord Jesus solemnly draws their attention to the answer to their confusion beginning with “Truly, truly” --words intended to alert them to something profoundly important. What He reveals by way of clarification doesn’t explain the precise point that was troubling them. Calvary, an empty grave, and Pentecost would do that soon enough. What He does give them will leave their minds in a state of watchfulness and preparation for the foretold, yet unexpected, thrill that would come later

MacLaren makes this application: “And so there is a great deal in all our lives, in His dealings with us, in His revelation of Himself to us, that must remain mysterious and unintelligible. But if we will keep close to Him, and speak plainly to Him in prayer and communion about our difficulties, He will send us triumphant hope and large confidence of a coming joy, that will ... make us feel that the burden is no longer painful to carry. Much that must remain dark through life will be lightened when we [see Him face to face]; for the vision here is not perfect, and the knowledge here is as imperfect as the vision.”

“Dear friends!” he says, “the one question for us all is, ‘Do our eyes fix and fasten on that dear Lord, and is it the description of our own whole lives, that we see Him and walk with Him?’ Oh! if so, then life will be blessed, and death itself will be but as ‘a little while’ when we ‘shall not see Him,’ and then we shall open our eyes and behold Him close at hand, whom we saw from afar, and with wandering eyes, amidst the mists and illusions of earth. To see Him as He became for our sakes / is heaven on earth. To see Him as He is will be the heaven of heaven, and before that Face, ‘as the sun shining in His strength,’ all sorrows, difficulties, and mysteries will melt as morning mists.”

So the Lord tells them first that “you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice.” He’s told them several times before that He would be arrested, crucified, and laid in a grave, but three days later He would rise again; but they either couldn’t understand it or refused to accept it as a possibility. Instead of repeating the facts of what’s about to happen, He appeals to their emotions--

emotions that were probably all over the place at that moment. He understands that they will be overcome with the sense of utter failure; confusion over the things they thought were going to happen--in spite of everything Jesus had told them to the contrary--; and crushing regret that they couldn't have done something to prevent it.

Even as their hearts will be devastated by the totally unexpected and cataclysmic end of all their hopes and dreams, they'll watch in horror as the world rejoices. The Jewish leaders will celebrate the end of this One Whom they feared would cause the Romans to come and take away both their place and their nation, as they warned in John, chapter eleven, verse 48.

The Pharisees would rejoice because the Lord's call to a higher level of righteousness than theirs is silenced. The Sadducees would rejoice as an end to His compelling witness of things unseen and eternal has come. The people would rejoice as another messianic uprising has been crushed, and they can return to business as usual in their brutal, slavish, yet predictable coexistence with their Roman oppressors.

Pilate was afraid of Him, but he was even more afraid of the people who cried out--chapter nineteen, verse twelve--"If you release this man [Jesus], you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." And then there's the rest of the world that Jesus told Nicodemus about in chapter three, verse nineteen, when He said: "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed." The world was tired of the Light of the world exposing their deeds. With Jesus gone, they would rejoice.

In the midst of all this unspeakable horror, Jesus tells them, "You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy." The Lord Jesus possibly looks ahead three days to see the look on Mary's face as He calls her name and all

the grief of seeing her Savior die and all the confusion of an empty tomb, thinking that someone had stolen His body transform into ecstatic joy; or the look on the disciples' faces as He appears before them as they hid for fear of the Jews; or "Doubting" Thomas' realization when Jesus says, "Put your hand here in My side; stop doubting and believe;" or the rapturous recognition of the two He would meet on the road to Emmaus who, when He revealed Himself to them, said, "'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?' And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!'" And that was just the joy they would experience on Sunday. In eternity, their joy would be made complete!

What would seem to be their worst nightmare would soon become the source of their greatest comfort and delight. In just a few hours, their time of weeping would begin, but it would last only a little while. And, even in the midst of their agonizing moment of failure and defeat, if they could only remember what their Lord had said, "A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me," they would be reassured by those words, "your sorrow will turn into joy."

Paul knew what that would be like. In his second letter to the followers of Christ in Corinth, chapter four, verse seventeen, he writes, "For this slight, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." "This slight, momentary affliction"--whatever it may be--will soon--in the light of eternity--slip away, never to be remembered in the eternal weight of glory that awaits every believer.

Then, to illustrate what He meant by their sorrow turning into joy, He invites them into a labor and delivery room--verse 21: "When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has

delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.”

This metaphor of a woman in labor is a common picture of terror-stricken anguish in the Old Testament. For example, Jeremiah records the judgment on the people of Judah in chapter four, verse 31, with these words: “For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, ‘Woe is me! I am fainting before murderers.’”

But, when the baby is finally delivered, all the pain that the mother has endured during her delivery and the nine months prior to that / are outshined and no longer matter in light of the wondrous arrival of a beautiful child. “Your grief will end shortly; your joy will never end.”

The image for their immediate situation is clear enough, but some scholars wonder if there might be a secondary event prefigured in this image. In Isaiah, chapter 66, verse seven, we read the prophetic announcement of the repopulation of Judah following the Babylonian exile spoken of as a “birth”: “Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children.” Many scholars see a future fulfillment in this passage in the birth of the Church. As Jesus was explaining to the disciples, the events of the coming days would be like the pains of a woman in childbirth, but those pains would be overshadowed by the glorious birth of--not a child--but the Church as the Lord is raised from the dead on the third day. The disciples certainly weren’t thinking along those lines, but Jesus could have been.

Verse 22: “So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.” Just a minute ago, the Lord had confused them by saying, “A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.” Now, as He brushed the clouds of confusion away, He says, “I will see you.”

They will see Him and He will see them. The reality of their restored communion with the Lord is a sure thing. His, “You will see Me” fixes their attention on them and their perception of Him.

MacLaren writes, “Is there any joy to us in the thought that the Lord Christ sees us? Oh! if our hearts are really His, if our lives are as truly built on Him as our profession of being Christians alleges that they are, then all that we need for the satisfaction of our nature, for the supply of our various necessities, or as an armour against temptation, and an amulet against sorrow, will be given to us, in the belief that His eye is fixed upon us. *There* is the foundation of the truest joy for [us]. ... One look *towards* Christ will more than repay and abolish earth’s sorrow. One look *from* Christ will fill our hearts with sunshine. All tears are dried on eyes that meet His. Loving hearts find their heaven in looking into one another’s faces, and if Christ be our love, our deepest and purest joys will be found in His glance and our answering gaze.” “I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice.”

But there’s more: “I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.” These words of assurance apply to their immediate situation and the hostility that these frightened disciples were about to face--that Judas’ plans, the Sanhedrin’s judgment, the people’s condemnation, Pilate’s sentence, the soldier’s nails and spears, and the silence that would follow as the stone is rolled in front of the tomb would never take away from the joy they would experience beginning on the day of His resurrection, and stretching on throughout all eternity.

Paul would put it this way, writing to the believers in Rome in chapter eight, beginning in verse 35: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Not only will He see them again and no one will be able to take away their joy, there’s even more to the joy that will be theirs--verse 23: “In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

“In that day you will ask nothing of me.” At the moment, the disciples were full of questions, least of all the one that was currently on their lips. But a time is soon coming, with His ascension into heaven and the sending of the Holy Spirit, that He won’t be physically present to ask as He was at that moment.

After Sunday morning, so many of the questions they’ve been asking will have been answered, including the one they’re focused on at the moment. Not only would the next few hours reveal things they had yet to understand, / from that time on, it would be the Comforter, the Counselor, the Helper, Who would remind them of everything He’s told them and teach them everything they needed to know.

The word we have translated “ask” has two different meanings--we ask a question, and we ask for some thing. In the first part of this verse, it seems that Jesus is speaking of asking Him a question, while the second part of the verse seems to refer to asking for some thing. The first time “ask” appears in this sentence, “in that day” they will ask nothing of Him because He will have

ascended into heaven and will no longer be among them to answer their questions, or, since all their questions about “a little while” will have been, by then answered, they’ll now understand everything else that He’s told them.

Jesus has recently told the disciples in verse seven of chapter fifteen, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” Was “Ask whatever you wish” a blank check from God given to them and to us to fill in as we want--a genie in a lamp to command at your slightest whim? No, not at all. That’s not what Jesus says here. There are two prerequisites for this asking--abiding in Christ / and His words abiding in you. When those two conditions are fully met and you ask for something, you are simply asking as Christ would ask--exactly what David had in mind when he wrote in Psalm 37, verse four, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

Contrary to many prayers today, to pray “in the Name of Jesus” is not some magical invocation of the Name, “Jesus,” but it’s to pray as someone who is “in Christ”--who abides in Christ and His words rest and remain in him or her, to call upon Him not simply by using His given Name, but praying in the power and authority of what that Name embodies, because you’ve placed your faith in Him. So, when we ask in the power and authority of His Name, we’re asking according to His will, not only dependent on the fullness of Who He is but also in the subjection of our wills to His will. As they address their prayers to the Father through the Holy Spirit abiding in them in the Name of Jesus, “whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.”

“Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” They had asked nothing “in His Name,” not only because they lacked the spiritual insight to pray in His Name, but also because they had prayed according to their own notions of Who the Messiah would be and not according to Who He truly is.

Just a few minutes ago--chapter fourteen, verse eight--, Philip interrupted Jesus to say, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." The Lord answered, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip?" Peter's outburst in response to the Lord's announcement in Matthew, chapter sixteen, verse 22, that He would be killed, is one of those empty, thoughtless prayers that's literally translated, "God be merciful to You; this shall not happen." They really didn't fully know or trust Who He is, so they weren't praying in the power and authority of Who He is.

Very soon, they will behold the resurrected Christ, the Messiah, and all their wrong ideas about Who Jesus is will be erased, and they will understand Who He truly is; they will receive the Holy Spirit; and they will have access to the Father to offer their prayers in the Name of His Son, their Savior.

So we hear Peter's new prayer in Acts, chapter three, verse six, speaking to the man who had been crippled for forty years whom he and John met in the Temple: "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" "And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God."

And, in asking, their joy will be full. As He said back in chapter fifteen, verse eleven, the objective, the goal, of everything He's been saying was so that their joy would be full: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." Again, if you've been counting, this is the fourth time here in only five verses that He's mentioned joy. Do you think Jesus wanted His disciples then and He wants His disciples now to experience the fullness of His joy? Absolutely!

And did they experience His joy? Abundantly! When Paul and Barnabus preached the gospel in Antioch of Pisidia, nearly the entire city came out to hear them. Acts, chapter thirteen, verse 52--"The disciples were filled with joy

and with the Holy Spirit.” Peter, in the opening verses of his first letter, verse eight, writes, “Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.” John tells us that he’s writing his first letter--chapter one, verse four--“so that our joy may be complete.” And, in the closing verses of his letter to the followers of Christ in Rome, Paul wrote, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

We could spend an entire lesson and more on this word, “joy,” but let me simply conclude with these words from Alexander MacLaren: “Is it possible then, that, amidst all the ups and downs, the changes and the sorrows of this fluctuating, tempest-tossed life of ours we may have a deep and stable joy? ‘That your joy may be full,’ says my text, or ‘fulfilled,’ like some jewelled, golden cup charged to the very brim with rich and quickening wine, so that there is no room for a drop more. Can it be that ever, in this world, [we could] be happy up to the very limits of [our] capacity? Was anybody ever so blessed that he could not be more so? Was your cup ever so full that there was no room for another drop in it? Jesus Christ says that it may be so, and He tells us how it may be so. Bring your desires into harmony with God’s, and you will have none unsatisfied amongst them; and so you will be blessed to the full; and though sorrow comes, as of course it will come, still you may be blessed.”

Such was our Lord’s guidance for His disciples as they listened, confused and bewildered, in their faltering belief. Such is our Lord’s hope for you and me today as we ask for the Lord’s will to be done in us as we pray in the power and authority of His Name so that our joy would be full, “For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

Thank you for being a part of our brief overview of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus seen through John's eyes that's meant to lead you to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, by believing in Him, you might experience the fullness of life that can only come in Him.

Next week, John invites us to listen in on Jesus' prayer to His Father before He crosses over the Kidron Valley to enter the Garden of Gethsemane. We'll hear Him as He prays for Himself, for His disciples, and for all those who believe in Him because of the disciple's witness, including you and me. Trey will speak to the first part of that prayer, and, in verses eleven through 23 of chapter seventeen, we'll hear what the Lord asks for His followers then and now.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

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