

Sermon Title: **“Trading Sorrow for Joy”**

Series: *Learn, Live, Lead* **Good Friday 2022**

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Text: Matthew 27:45-53; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

## **Introduction**

Sunday, we looked at Jesus’ entrance through the *East Gate*, commonly referred to as the Gate of *Mercy* or *Beautiful*. It was the Gate closest to the front door of the Temple area and arguably the most trafficked. What happened with the casting down of Palm Branches and celebratory petition before God was nothing short of a Divine *miss* in a Divinely appointed *moment*.

Remember, Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead and as a witness he is walking about and testifying of Jesus’ power. The Jewish leaders are not just after Jesus, but now also Lazarus. There was something different about this Jesus that stirred such an enthusiasm among the crowd.

While this crowd cheered Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem, many would cry out for His rejection and crucifixion. While we may walk away from the story here, this is not where it ends. For, many in this same crowd would come to face the Jesus whom they said was not the Messiah they wanted yet proved to be the Messiah they needed. *What made the difference?*

Pentecost and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. It is the difference between the coming upon from the Spirit and being indwelt by the Spirit. *But more on that Sunday!*

Further, as John noted how the Greeks were starting to draw toward Jesus, desiring to see Him in fulfillment of the Father’s Promise to the Son, we see what Jesus’ focus is on.

*“And Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.’” -**John 12:23-24***

It is here Jesus begins to be *troubled* (John 12:27), John notes, as He focus’ on the Cross in front of Him. While the following few days that make up this final week were filled with both proclamation and demonstration of His Message and Kingdom, the Will of God would lead Him nowhere else, but that Hill called Golgotha.

*“Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” -**Hebrews 12:2***

The author of Hebrews was writing to followers of Jesus who were about to throw in the towel of their faith. In an ongoing effort to encourage them to stay the course, the author lifts up the Person and Work of Jesus in how He fulfilled everything that was shadowed of Him in the Old Testament. Especially this final week leading up to His Crucifixion. The author notes Jesus’

gaze was not just on the cross, but on what His death would accomplish. Suffering has its purpose; and with God in control of the intensity, we like Christ can look to Him for our joy even when the moment seems overwhelmingly against us. In some ways, I can guess why the author of this letter called Hebrews left their name off!

What did happen with Jesus' death on the cross? What was the point of His suffering?

Because, if His suffering had a purpose, then so does ours. ***Will today's sorrow give way to tomorrow's joy?***

### ***I. Bearing our Sorrow***

*“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. 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. 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.” **-John 16:20-24***

Jesus' focus continued to narrow down as the cadence toward the cross continued. From the great crowds that threw palms, to the final words against the religious leaders of the Temple, Jesus now shares directly with, and only with, those who had been the closest to him throughout His Ministry.

The ***world*** will rejoice; ***you*** will have sorrow.

***You*** will rejoice; the ***world*** will have sorrow.

Jesus is preparing them for the Holy Spirit and the difference He will make. Instead of asking Jesus, Jesus is preparing them to step up to the Father. At His right hand it is almost a sense of encouragement, *You can come and talk to dad*. As this relationship will build, we too will know the Joy Jesus has as His focus is beyond the suffering of the Cross to the love He has between Father, Son, and Spirit.

Jesus would further pray,

*“O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” **-John 17:25-26***

Love & Joy are beautiful treasures to have and experience. Yet the hour has come for Jesus to be betrayed and condemned to death by crucifixion. After an all-night trial that saw Him passed beyond the Temple Leaders, Herod, and Pontius Pilate, we come to Jesus bearing His cross along the lonely road to Calvary.

Along this road are those who weep for Him and this turn of events. To them Jesus says,

*“Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’ and to the hills, ‘cover us’. For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” **-Luke 23:28-31***

This is the sorrow that would come upon the world who rejoices at Jesus’ death. While Jesus’ followers endure sorrow with childrearing, the world withdraws and sees new life as a weight not needing to be born. Where Jesus’ followers have authority to cast down mountains and pursue the hills from whence our help comes from, the world longs for the mountains to fall on them and the hills to hide them. *Hide them from whom?*

***God on His day of Visitation. The day in which His judgment flows out upon sin. His wrath against sin.***

If the Romans are doing this to Jesus, the green (living) wood, imagine what they will do to you who are an eager to burn dried out piece of wood? To reject Jesus is to reject life. There is no hope for anyone outside of Jesus.

**When Jesus Returns, believers will trade their temporary sorrows for eternal joy while the rest of the world trades their temporary joy for eternal sorrow.**

Note that Jesus does not condemn them anymore than He condemned the woman taken in the state of adultery, for He did not come to condemn. We are already condemned, dead in our sin. Jesus came to save. Even on the journey to the cross, after His torturous whipping, amidst His clothes being gambled over, Jesus cries out,

*“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” **-Luke 23:34***

## **II. Joy Will Come**

*“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” **-Matthew 27:45-46***

More than merely quoting Scripture, Jesus embodies the lament of David spoken centuries before,

*“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groanings?” **-Psalm 22:1***

For centuries many minds have pondered this moment with Jesus. Perhaps this is the deepest, most penetrating moment of this journey to the cross where Jesus hung.

*“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” **-Isaiah 53:3***

Here, we have Jesus in His humanity humbling Himself to see God from our posture *and it is only a wall of darkness*. **Our sin separates us from God**. In this moment we see two Kingdoms facing each other. One Kingdom sensing Joy over the immanent defeat of Jesus by His death, another eager to break into the world over the sorrow of Jesus' death.

If God would not have sent Jesus, if Jesus would not have submitted in obedience, if the Spirit would not have anointed and filled, not one of us would ever see anything but a wall of darkness because of our sin.

This darkness comes upon all the land, inviting everyone to witness this kingdom transition.  
***Sorrow will be traded for joy while joy will be traded for sorrow.***

*“Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” -[Psalm 30:4-5](#)*

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*“You are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?”  
-[Habakkuk 1:13](#)*

**Habakkuk**, meaning *one who embraces*, was a prophetic voice for God in the Old Testament days when Nebuchadnezzar was marching his Babylonian military strength on a road that would eventually lead to Judah. He struggled with the relationship between Israel and God, posing a series of questions to try and find resolution. What is interesting here is the Hebrew used. It does not mean that God does not see evil nor does this deny that He is everywhere.

To see evil and cannot look at wrong means that God sees us, *but we do not see Him*. The relationship is not ok. We are not at a good place. God does not tolerate our sin; He sees us and it. God sees the evil in this world, and from our perspective God either does not see nor is doing anything about it. It is as if He doesn't see or hear us. All we see is a wall of darkness.

*“Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” -[Isaiah 59:1-2](#)*

And that is the point. God is inviting us to see and feel what He does. We say He is a Father who doesn't listen, nor understands us. God says we are children that do not listen and obey Him.

God the Father *did see* His Son; He *did hear* Him. God did see each hand and word of rejection. God did feel every blow of the hammer to the nail that bound His Son. God beheld His Son lifted for the eyes of all to behold. ***Yet, in this state of Him bearing our sin, the offense prevented Him (Jesus) from beholding His Father.***

Jesus bore our sin upon Himself, and in this state, dying for sin without sin, He experienced the deepest sorrow expressed in the Hebrew **groaning**- *a roaring of distress from abandoned, hopeless sorrow*. In context, Jesus bore our sin before a Holy God and experienced the Kingdom wall between darkness (sorrow) and Light (Joy). Only Jesus could have experienced this on our behalf to bring us an outcome different than the eternal groaning over our sin as we endure the wrath of God.

*Jesus is truly the innocent bearing the guilty and it's from this place He cries out to His Father.*

The Father desired to embrace His Son, as He desires to embrace us all. To do this, God has to deal with that which comes between us. *Sin*. The festal lamb has been bound with nails in order to bring us Peace with the Father, enabling that eternal embrace to happen.

*“Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar!” -Psalm 118:25-27*

### **III. Reconciliation: The exchange of sorrow for joy!**

*“And Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.” -Matthew 27:50*

Wait- what just happened? Jesus died?

**Yielded up** here in the Greek means more than simply died. It means to *forcefully* send away, such as *divorcing* what was meant to be together forever. Let that sink in for a moment.

Jesus sent away His spirit from the Body as Abraham sent away the bondwoman and her son (See **Genesis 21:10**). Jesus had to break up His life *forcefully* because He was without sin and would not naturally die, for death comes as a penalty for sin. *Go away, get out!*

Because of this,

*“The curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.” -Matthew 27:51*

Heaven invaded earth; Jesus came bringing His Kingdom into this world one heart at a time beginning with His own life! *We now, because Jesus shed His blood for us, have direct access to the Father for anything in Jesus' Name!*

The shaking leaves no one to misunderstand what is happening both in the spiritual and physical realms. Heaven is invading earth as did the children liberated from Egyptian bondage entered and conquered the Land of Promise!

Jesus' death did more than just open the way for us then and now, it also paid a debt and fulfilled a promise that began with Adam!

*“The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” -Matthew 27:52-53*



As the breath of Jesus flees His body, it spans outward over every grave of those who held God to His word of promise- of what would be fulfilled in Jesus. From the promised of a crushed serpents head to Adam, to the generational faithfulness toward Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob- onward through Moses and the prophets and King David- the driest of bones felt the resurrection power of Jesus' breath!

Jesus' life brough Lazarus back to life as a witness of His power. Jesus' death opened countless graves as a witness to His power. Imagine what His Resurrection, Ascension, and outpoured Spirit will accomplish!

*“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.”*

**-Colossians 2:13-15**

And here is the heart of this message. Jesus was truly the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. Every promise of God from the moment sin entered our story all the way through until sin is removed rested on this work Jesus would do- His Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension.

*“For all the promises of God find their Yes in him (Jesus). That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”* **-2 Corinthians 1:20-22**

*“He said, ‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”* **-John 19:30**

Jesus paid our debt; because of His death we can have life. We all stand condemned because of our sin before our God who is Holy. It is because of His great love toward us that He sent His Son to take this journey to the cross, to die for our sin. This is God's gift- eternal life for our eternal death.

If we are willing to humble ourselves before God and embrace His gift, we can be saved! If we humble ourselves and return to God, we can be restored. But understand this, dear saints and saints in the making, God has and is saving us with purpose. *Kingdom purpose.*

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* **-2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

***Will you come to Jesus right now, and trade your sorrow for His joy?***