



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### Sermon Notes

*The Final Discourse: Jesus Comforts His Disciples*

John 16:16-33

June 18, 2006

### BACKGROUND / REVIEW

- ⇒ This passage occurs just prior to Jesus and His disciples entering into the Garden of Gethsemane.
- ⇒ Jesus, knowing that His *hour* had come, began speaking to His disciples, preparing them for what was coming – a time of weeping and mourning.
- ⇒ As will be clear in this text, the disciples still have not been able to accept that the Messiah would **die**. This truth did not match with the common Jewish interpretation of Old Testament Messianic passages.

### Verse 16

- Jesus begins this passage by giving two successive “little while” statements.
- These “veiled” references to the **crucifixion** and **resurrection**, respectively, confound the disciples and lead to Jesus’ words on comfort amidst trouble.

### Verses 17-19

- The disciples, then, begin discussing the confusing words of Jesus.
- What has clearly confused them is the double use of the “little while” phrase.
- Also, they combine the words Jesus said earlier in Verse 5 – ‘because I go to the Father’ in their discussion.
- “If Jesus planned to set up a messianic kingdom, the disciples may have reasoned, why first go away, and if not, why the need to come back?” Andreas Kostenberger
- Then, Jesus asks them if they are discussing what He said (‘in a little while...’) – certainly knowing well that they were. In fact, there is little doubt that the words of Jesus were

*intended* to cause the disciples confusion and discussion amongst one another, that Jesus may use this as a means of illustrating a deeper point.

## Verses 20 – 22

- ❑ In these next three Verses, Jesus will elaborate on His statement in Verse 16 ('A little while ...').
- ❑ Verse 20 is most definitely referring to the weeping and lamenting of the disciples immediately after Jesus dies on the cross.
- ❑ The words for “weep” and “lament” only occur in this Gospel in the context of a death. Recall that at the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus wept.
- ❑ Notice the **clear contrast between** the disciples and ‘the world’:
  - The disciples will weep and lament
  - The world will rejoice.
    - Jesus, being the light of the world, is hated by the world because He exposes their sin; and those walking in darkness naturally flee from the light. Therefore, when Jesus is dead, the world surmises, He is gone permanently. Therefore, the world will rejoice that it has rid itself of Jesus for good (so it thinks).
- ❑ Then, Jesus says, ‘You will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.’
- ❑ NOTE: Given that the disciples and the world stand in direct contrast to one another, we can, therefore, conclude that when the disciples’ grief will be turned into joy, the world’s joy will be turned into weeping and lamenting.
- ❑ Also, this Verse is directly related to Verse 16 [this will be even clearer in Verse 22] ('A little while...a little while') where Jesus, rather cryptically, referred to His death and resurrection.
- ❑ Therefore, the disciples will weep after His death, but rejoice after His resurrection.
- ❑ What is significant in this Verse is the following:

**The Lord Jesus Christ does NOT say that the disciples’ grief will be *replaced* by joy; but, rather, their grief *will be turned into* joy.**
- ❑ **This truth can ONLY EXIST IN A LIFE LIVED IN FAITH IN CHRIST!**
- ❑ The best the world can offer in times of great tragedy is ‘time.’ As time passes by, so the world says, the pain of suffering and loss will go away, for ‘time will heal all wounds’ (but it truly does NOT). However, on Christ can offer something **RADICALLY** different –

**Christ takes the very object of our pain and suffering and transforms it into something joyous!**

- ❑ In other words, from the time of Jesus' crucifixion until His resurrection, the cross will be a source of great weeping and mourning; however, **AFTER** the resurrection, the cross will be a **source of rejoicing** – for it is there that the Prince of Darkness and the world itself was defeated and overcome.
- ❑ For an individual who is not 'in Christ' but is 'in Adam' and part of the world, the best He can even hope for at the death of a loved one is that the pain will decrease over time and that it will be eventually replaced, at least to some degree, with the joy of **something else**.
- ❑ However, only Christ can actually take our pain and suffering and use it for our good – see **Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."**
- ❑ Then, Jesus gives an analogy of childbirth, and the pain associated with it.
  - Although a woman experiences excruciating pain in childbirth, she completely forgets it after the child is born, for she is so joyful that she has a new child.
  - Possibly the primary reason that Jesus uses this analogy is that throughout the Old Testament, as well as Jewish literature, birth pangs are associated with the coming of the Messiah and the inaugurating of a new era and kingdom.
    - Isaiah 21:2-03; 26:16-21
    - Jeremiah 13:21
    - Micah 4:9-10
    - The specific verse that Jesus is possibly referring to is **Isaiah 66:7-14**.
- ❑ Finally, in Verse 22, Jesus replaces the 'a little while' with 'now', therefore, revealing that the cross (the object of the first 'a little while') is imminent.
- ❑ Then, Jesus says something profound, "Therefore, you too have grief now; but **I** will see you again."
  - In other words, the joy of the disciples will be ultimately rooted, not in *their* seeing of Him; but, rather, in **His seeing of them**.
  - This truth expands well past just the post-resurrection experiences.
  - For example, the assurance of our salvation rests ultimately, not in the sincerity of our profession of faith in Christ [which we can often question], but the objective truth of the Father's election of us in Christ Jesus.
  - Jesus emphasizes this truth in John 15:15: "You did not choose me, but I chose you..."

- Also, Paul echoes this truth in Galatians 4:9, ‘But now that you know God – or rather to be known by God.’
- So fundamental will the transformation of sorrow to joy be in the disciples, Jesus says, that ‘no one will take your joy away from you.’ In other words, the resurrection will so change the disciples that they will be part of another ‘world’ – the ‘new creation.’
- The reason for this is that their joy rests, not in the world...that which is temporary, but in the work and sovereign will of Almighty God...that which is eternal. The world did not, in fact cannot, give the joy the disciples will have, therefore, the world cannot take it away.
- This is similar to the nature and security of our salvation – we did not earn, therefore, we cannot lose it. The security of the believer is based upon the **ability of Christ to preserve the believer in Himself** (John 6:37); not the ability of the believer to remain ‘in Christ.’

### Verse 23

- Jesus opens Verse 23 with the words, ‘In that day...’
- He is clearly referring to the period of time, following the resurrection, when the disciples will rejoice because of their risen Lord.
- But, the context of this Verse indicates that the time will also be after the Holy Spirit has descended upon the Church, united believers with Christ and personally indwelt them.
- Jesus says, “In that day you will not question me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.”
- The reason the disciples will no longer ask Jesus anything is twofold:
  - First, because the Holy Spirit has been sent, the Paraclete, He will guide the disciples into all truth (16:13), reminding them of the words that Jesus said (14:26), teaching them “all things.” Further, He will take of Jesus Christ and reveal Him to the disciples. In other words, the Holy Spirit, not the Incarnate Christ, will become their teacher.
  - Secondly, there will be a fundamental change in the manner in which the disciples pray, for they will pray, basically, (1) to the Father, (2) in the name of Jesus Christ, (3) in the power of the Holy Spirit. [This does not mean that we do not pray to the Son, but that it is normally done in the triadic way to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.]
    - Jesus once again reiterates the truth that “anything asked in the name of the Son will be answered by the Father.”

- To pray “in My name” is to pray in accord with all that Christ is – His work, His will, and His purposes.
- Furthermore, to pray “in My name,” one must be “in Christ,” united with Him on the basis of His atoning work and the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### Verse 24

- ❑ Up until this point, the disciples have asked for nothing of the Father in the name of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ❑ This is because Jesus has yet to be crucified and the Holy Spirit has not yet been sent by the Father and the Son.
- ❑ Then, Jesus says, “ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”
  - In other words, ask in accordance with the character and nature of Christ and you will receive. We will, therefore, receive that which is in accordance with the will of the Son. And we know the will of the Son – that we (1) love Him, (2) obey Him, (3) remain in Him, (4) remain in His word, and (5) bear much fruit.
  - The bearing of fruit in Chapter 15 is similar to one’s joy being “made full” here.

#### Verse 25

- ❑ Jesus has been speaking in ‘figurative language’ as evidenced in Verse 21 – a woman and childbirth.
- ❑ However, once Jesus dies, is resurrected, ascends to the Father, and sends the Holy Spirit, the disciples be told plainly of the Father.
- ❑ The reason for this is that Jesus is perfect revelation of the Father (John 1:18), and once the Holy Spirit comes and unites believers with Christ and indwells them, He will lead them into all truth, unwrapping the revelation of the Father bound up in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❑ Therefore, Jesus, who is the perfect revelation of the Father, will tell them plainly of the Father, through the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

#### Verses 26 – 27

- ❑ Now, Jesus begins to explain that ‘In that day’ the disciples will have direct access to the Father through the name of Jesus Christ, on the basis of His finished atoning work, in His Incarnation, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.
- ❑ This Verse (‘I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf’) does NOT mean that Jesus does not intercede for us – for He does (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1). Rather, it is saying that we have DIRECT ACCESS to the Father through Son (in His name).

- ❑ For, the Father loves all who love the Son, and it is on the basis of that relationship (Father and Son) that we have access to the Father.
- ❑ Further, because the disciples (and all future followers of the Lord Jesus Christ) believed, by faith, in the true identity of Jesus Christ – that He came forth from the Father – they are justified by that faith and declared righteous by the Father (and granted access to Him through the Son).

### Verses 28 – 30

- ❑ In Verse 28, Jesus very succinctly explains His mission: He came from the Father into the world (through the Incarnation) and He was leaving the world again and going to the Father (through the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension).
- ❑ In Verses 29-30, we see a classic case of misunderstanding on the part of the disciples, for they claim that **Now** they understand that Jesus is from God.”
- ❑ However, they certainly do NOT understand the words of Jesus (revealed in classic irony seen often in the Gospel of John).
- ❑ Obviously, if they truly understood the words of Jesus, they would not have acted as they did at the at the arrest, trials, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ (all of which are just hours away).

### Verses 31 – 32

- ❑ Jesus, knowing that the disciples did not understand what He was really saying, said, “Do you know believe (of course knowing they did not)?”
- ❑ He, then, in Verse 32, explains that “an **hour** is coming...for you to be scattered” Almost every time the word “hour” is used in the Gospel of John, it is used to describe the hour of Christ’s crucifixion.
- ❑ Furthermore, at the crucifixion, the disciples, who think they understand the mission of Jesus Christ, will scatter and abandon their master.
- ❑ However, in contrast to the disciples, the Father will not abandon the Son, for Jesus says, “the Father is with Me.”
  - Some believe that this contradicts Jesus’ ‘cry of dereliction’ on the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me.”
  - However, Jesus’ sense of abandonment could not have been a “real” abandonment by the Father, as this would have been a break in the relationship of the Father and Son, thus dividing the triune God, which is not possible.

## Verse 33

- ❑ Notice the ‘**in Christ**’ language: ‘in Me you may have peace...’
  - Christ becomes our covenant partner, as the Holy Spirit binds us to him. **Everything that is his as the one for us becomes ours.** We become one with Christ in the mysterious union of which becoming one flesh in marriage is an analogy (Ephesians 5:30-32). The closeness of the union is dependent upon our mutual possession by, and possession of, the Holy Spirit. By him, Christ bestows on us all his goods...**The central role of the Spirit is to reveal Christ and to unite us to him and to all those who participate in his body.** Just as the indwelling of Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit are two aspects of one and the same reality in the New Testament, so to sustain us ‘in Christ’ is the heart and soul of the Spirit’s ministry.”  
Sinclair Ferguson
  - John Calvin, commenting on 1 Corinthians 1:5, states, “...since we have been made one with him [Christ], **he [Christ] shares with us all that he has received from the Father.**”
  - As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, united with Him through the Holy Spirit, we receive every blessing that Christ receives. The reason for this is the ‘great exchange’ – on the Cross, Christ assumed our humanity and took our place – He suffered the wrath of God in our place. In return, we receive His ‘robe’ of righteousness.
- ❑ The verb Jesus uses that is translated ‘overcome’ means, more accurately, ‘won the victory over.’
- ❑ “Jesus’ point is that by his death he has made the world’s opposition pointless and beggarly. The decisive battle has been waged and won. The world continues its wretched attacks, but those who are in Christ share the victory he has won. They cannot be harmed by the world’s evil, and they know who triumphs in the end. From this they take heart, and begin to share his peace.”  
D.A. Carson
- ❑ **Recall Verse 20 – “you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice;”** In other words, the world that once rejoiced is now defeated, overcome!
- ❑ Let us never forget that the very One with whom we are united [Jesus Christ] not only overcame the world, but He is the Creator of the very world He overcame!