

Series: John

Title: The Believer's Sight & Joy

Text: John 16: 16-22

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**John 16: 16: A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17: Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18: They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19: Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? 20: Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21: A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22: And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.**

There are two kinds of seeing—two kinds of sight. Carnal sight—seeing with these eyes—as William Cowper put it, “*judge not by feeble sense.*” Then there is faith’s sight—seeing with the eye of faith—true sight—faith sees what is not seen and cannot be seen with carnal eyes

Hebrews 11:1: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen

The Lord Jesus speaks of both these kinds of sight—*John 16: 16: A little while, and ye shall not see me.* This is carnal sight. With carnal eyes they would see him crucified and buried. While in the grave they would not see him.

Then the Lord speaks of faith—*John 16: 16...and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.* This is faith. Yes, they would see him with carnal sight after his resurrection. But he says, “Ye shall see me, *because I go to the Father.*” Because he went to the Father—he sent the Holy Spirit—so that his people are made to see by faith. This was his promise that night:

John 14:19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also

The world has not the Spirit of God—so the world seeth not by faith, only carnal sight. But because Christ lives—ascended to the Father—he sent the Spirit of God. The Spirit gives faith in the new spirit. Thereby, through faith we see Christ while the unregenerate world who only sees with carnal sight, sees him not.

## CARNAL SIGHT

What effect did carnal sight have on the apostles and on the unregenerate world?

**John 16: 16: A little while, and ye shall not see me:... 20: Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful...**

Christ speaks of his crucifixion and burial. For a little while his disciples saw him no more with carnal sight. The apostles had faith before Christ went to the cross. But with carnal sight, they saw Christ crucified and buried and saw him no more with carnal sight for a little while. That carnal sight made them weep and lament and lose hope.

The world—the unregenerate who did not have faith—rejoiced to see Christ crucified and buried. The world that had no faith—judging by carnal sight—judged Christ to be stricken and smitten of God as a blasphemous sinner. So the world rejoiced in his death because they thought they were doing God’s service.

That shows us the danger of judging by carnal sight.

But we see this danger for a child of God as well. The apostles had faith but the carnal sight of seeing Christ crucified and buried left them in unbelief and sorrowful, as Christ told them it would—*John 16: 20: Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament,..*

The apostles and disciples of the Lord had faith. But judging by the sight of their carnal eyes, they were overcome with unbelief and wept and lamented and could not believe. After his resurrection, Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene,

Mark 16: 10: *And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11: And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. 12: After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13: And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.*

The disciples on the road to Emmaus expressed their unbelief and sorrow.

Luke 24: 21: But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.

So this is the danger of judging by the sight of our eyes rather than seeing Christ by faith and believing his every word.

## **FAITH'S SIGHT**

Christ promised that because he went to the Father he would send the Spirit so that his children shall be made to see by faith.

**John 16: 16:...and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.**

He has been declaring that it was expedient that he go to the cross then to the Father because then he would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. So again, in a little while, he appeared to them. He did appear bodily and they saw him with their carnal eyes. But he gave them the Holy Ghost and they saw him by faith and that is when their sorrow was turned to joy.

Carnal sight in those with faith resulted in unbelief, lamenting and sorrow. But beholding that same sight by faith, they saw Christ victorious and it gave them great joy—*John 16: 20:...and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

Faith is the true sight of the believer—faith beholds the spiritual, the reality, the eternal. Faith beholds Christ accomplish declaring God just—fulfilling the law for his people by his death. Faith beholds Christ accomplished the justification of his people—he made us the righteousness of God in him—he redeemed us from the curse of the law. Faith beholds him ascended to the Father and his people in him. Christ said that the Spirit of God shall convince his child—

John 16:10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

Those without faith say they do not believe because by carnal sight they do not see Christ any more. They do not see him gone to the Father. Carnal sight sees him no more in the flesh so the world does not believe. But it is that very thing faith sees. The Spirit gives faith and convinces us he is our Righteousness because we see him no more with carnal eyes. Faith sees he has gone to the Father. By this the Spirit convinces us Christ is our only Righteousness. Thus through faith by the very same sight that caused sorrow—Christ crucified—the Spirit turns our sorrow to joy. Christ gave a parable to illustrate this. It is timely for us since Kristyn just went through child birth.

## **SORROW TURNED TO JOY**

**John 16: 21: A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.**

Christ's death on the cross was the travail of his soul—he saw his children justified and is satisfied. The Spirit of God makes us behold that when Christ was quickened arose from the grave right then his body—his church, his people—arose as one new man in Christ like the birth of a child. Christ's resurrection and ascension to God's right hand was our birth.

Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:...15: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; 16: And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

When Christ died, our body of sin was crucified. When he arose from the grave, his people were quickened and arose in him and sat down together at God's right hand, made the righteousness of God in him. We became one in Christ's one body by his death, burial and resurrection accomplishing the purging of our sin, atonement with God and newness of life in Christ. When the Spirit quickens us in time and gives us faith, we behold the exceeding riches of his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus in that it was accomplished in Christ our Righteousness.

Christ apostles saw him arise by carnal sight. But it was more than carnal sight that gave them joy. The Spirit made them behold by faith that Christ accomplished salvation for his people and Christ was their true joy which no man takes away—*John 16: 22: ...I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.* Faith's joy is Christ himself!

Psalm 149:2: Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

Isaiah 61: I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

We sorrow when think upon the agonies Christ endured on the cross. But when thinking of the redemption he accomplished for us and the glory he entered into our sorrow is turned into joy. Our joy in Christ is that in him we have the pardon of our sins and are made the righteousness of God in him.

The world rejoiced. They were eager to see Pilate judge him and condemn him. The unregenerate Jews rejoiced to see Christ upon the cross. They rejoiced when he died because they thought they had won. And seeing with the carnal eye, the world's rejoicing, made the disciples sorrow even more.

For a little while—the Lord's disciples were sorrowful. They looked for a temporal kingdom, saying, we thought “this was He that would have restored the kingdom to Israel.” Sorrow filled their hearts and they were ready to perish

At the remembrance of what our Lord endured, every believer is touched with sorrow. We sorrow Mainly because we were the cause of it. We crucified the Lord—it was the sin of his people he was bearing. It was our curse he bore. But through faith that very same Christ crucified is our joy because he is our Salvation by the accomplishment of his death.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

## **JOY THROUGH FAITH ALONE**

Christ said it is those who see by faith that are blessed—happy, joyful. True joy is joy in the Holy Ghost by the Spirit giving us faith to rest in Christ believing we are made the righteousness of God in him. That is how it really is. The blessed are those who see by faith. Remember what he said to Thomas? Thomas was not with the apostles when the Lord gave them the Holy Ghost? Thomas said,

John 20:25: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe....27: [the Lord said to him]...Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28: And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29: Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed [happy, full of joy] *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

The Holy Spirit gives us joy in Christ through faith—“*the just shall live by faith.*”

2 Corinthians 5:7: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

1 Peter 1:8: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Hebrews 11:27: By faith [Moses] forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Hebrews 2: 9: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man

Carnal religion glories in appearance. Unregenerate religion has to have movies and plays and rock bands and many outward things to entertain the flesh. (Ex. 20:1-4; Deut. 4:7-18). It is vain superstition and idolatry.

Paul spoke of carnal religion who—2 Corinthians 5:12:...glory in appearance, and not in heart. They rejected Paul due to appearance and commended themselves by themselves. They rejected Paul and tried to turn others away from Paul and away from the gospel of Christ which Paul was sent to preach. So Paul answered it by preaching the gospel of Christ. He declared of God's elect that we died with Christ and arose with Christ and are born of his Spirit. He said, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth KNOW WE HIM NO MORE" [after the flesh] (2 Cor. 5:16).

Carnal religion looked at Christ's life on this earth and saw a man despised and rejected by the most highly regarded religious men, established religion, even by his own family after the flesh. They only saw a man. They only saw a man that had no property, not even a place to lay his head. With carnal eyes they saw a man who at last suffered a cursed death—*for it is written cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree*. So they rejoiced to nail him to a tree. And unregenerate religion still scorn and mock at us for trusting and preaching Christ crucified alone.

But by the Spirit of God true religion knows Christ by faith, worships Him by faith, lives and walks by faith in Christ – NOT BY SIGHT! (John 4:23, 24; Phil. 3:3; Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38) The blessings of God are spiritual—experienced in the new heart by the Spirit of God. This is why our hope is in the Lord, even when we suffer and things appear dire by carnal sight.

Romans 8: 24: For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25: But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

God gives outward things and God sometimes takes away outward things. But God's blessing and joy is spiritual in the new heart through faith in Christ and NO MAN TAKETH THIS JOY FROM YOU.

Many times God blessed his people spiritually in the heart without giving them anything new temporally, even taking away things outwardly. On the other hand, when he took everything away from Israel by giving them over to captivity, those without the Spirit of God did not profit by being stripped outwardly. The blessings of God are spiritual applied to the heart of his child through the Spirit of God regardless of what God gives outwardly or takes away outwardly.

God sometimes takes away outward things when he chastens his child but the chastening is spiritual. The blessing of chastening is not in the taking away of outward things but spiritual in the new heart. God's

chastening is applied in the heart by the Spirit of God. Repentance toward God is granted and faith in Christ is grown and strengthened. That is the blessing of chastening. But if our religion is carnal then when God takes away carnal things a man is cast down and he is only lifted up if carnal things are given again.

God gave Hezekiah sickness. That is what we usually associate with the trial when we see sickness come. But the Spirit blessed his heart so that Hezekiah mourned and drew near to the Lord in his heart and cried to the Lord in faith. And God gave his health back. Then God gave Hezekiah exceeding much riches and honor. That is what we associate with blessing. But that is when the trial came. God did it to prove the blessings are not outward but in the heart. Hezekiah forgot God. When the foreigners came he showed them all his house but never once gave God the glory. But again the Spirit of God chastened Hezekiah in the heart spiritually and blessed it to his heart spiritually so that by faith he looked only to the Lord, where his true riches remained. But in both cases, the blessings of God were spiritual, sanctified to Hezekiah by the Spirit of God in the heart through faith in the LORD.

We err if we judge by carnal sight. David said of carnal men that their eyes bug out with fatness and they have all man could desire.” David was envious because he suffered. He was in the wilderness with nothing while the world prospered without a care. But David was taught of God they are calves fattened for the slaughter but by faith David was made to see that God had given him unsearchable riches in Christ. David saw by faith that those with temporal riches were bankrupt spiritually and were calves fattened for the slaughter. But David, though poor outwardly, was rich inwardly, spiritually, blessed of God in spirit through faith.

Carnal religion judged after the sight. Again, remember, they looked upon Christ and what he suffered and thought it proof that he was not God’s Son but was smitten of God and afflicted. Even now, without the Spirit of God giving faith to see things as they really are, carnal man looks upon Christ crucified and only sees a defeated man. But by the Spirit of God, through faith, we see the glory of God. By faith, we see our Righteousness, our Salvation. Through faith we behold that Christ was bearing our sin and our curse and with his stripes we are healed.

Child of God if you suffer in this world look not at the carnal to determine if God has blessed you. Think of the outward afflictions of God’s saints. Paul was beaten—imprisoned and suffered many more trials. Jeremiah was the weeping prophet; they threw him in a pit on one occasion. David spent more time in the wilderness than in the palace. The apostles were all martyred except for John and he was exiled to Patmos. But the fight of faith is a spiritual conflict “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” We need the Spirit of God to keep us believing on Christ as the Spirit of God kept them believing on Christ. Through faith Christ was the joy of their hearts which no man could take away. He shall be the joy of ours through faith by the Spirit.

The blessings of God are spiritual by the Spirit of God in the new man not merely outward in temporal things. Without the Spirit of God teaching us inwardly in spirit outward riches or outward poverty profit not in the least. Poor men are as proud as rich men apart from the Spirit humbling us in heart and giving faith to believe on Christ.

Job’s friends walked by sight not by faith. They judged by the seeing eye that Job had done some terrible thing for which God sent such a hard trial. But by God’s grace, Job believed God in spirit by the Spirit of God. Like Peter, Job’s faith failed not because Christ was the Author and Finisher of his faith. Christ was Job’s perfect faithful Head and Surety who prayed for him with the Father. That is why in his suffering, Job believed God and declared he would one day see Christ with his own eyes when the Lord raised him from the grave.

It was because God sanctified the trial to Job’s heart. Job’s latter end was better than the beginning—not merely because God gave him temporal blessings—but because God made him know Christ more in spirit through faith. Job learned a little better that the Lord gives and the Lord takes away temporal things but the spiritual gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Job’s latter end was blessed more than the beginning because he knew more fully that *Christ is the one thing needful*. Christ our joy shall never be taken from us.

Brethren, that is what Christ is teaching us through suffering. He is preparing us for the day when our bodies will die and nothing carnal shall give us any comfort—Christ is the one thing needful! Everything our sovereign Savior brings to pass in a believer's life, he is working together for our spiritual profit to teach us Christ is our Joy through faith and all his blessings are spiritual in and by him.

2 Corinthians 4:17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; [but how so?] 18: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

As long as Peter looked only to the Savior, he walked on the water. But when he saw the wind boisterous and looked on the waves, he was afraid and sank and cried, "Lord, save me!" So it will be with you, believer. Even that night that Christ told them these things, Christ was turning them from their sorrowful hearts, from looking at the carnal, and declaring himself as their only Righteousness and Life. So the Spirit of Truth will continue to guide us into CHRIST "THE TRUTH"

Brethren, you that are Christ's are not to faint in your minds, nor be discouraged. We have our sorrows in this flesh. But joy comes in the morning. "*For your sorrow will be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you.*" Our sorrows are for a moment but our joy is eternal. Our sorrows are usually only fleshly but our joys are most certainly spiritual. Look to Christ not to the temporal.

Ecclesiastes 11: 4: He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap

No man and no carnal thing can take Christ your Joy from you, child of God.

Isiah 51: 11: Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. 12: I, even I, am He that comforteth you; who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die...16:...I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of My hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people.

Therefore by the Spirit of God blessing us in spirit with faith, we have the joy of Christ and say with Habbakuk:

Habakkuk 3: 17: Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither *shall* fruit *be* in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and *there shall be* no herd in the stalls: 18: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19: The LORD God *is* my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' *feet*, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

One last word: Continue believing Christ unto the end because there is another meaning to this word "*And again a little while you shall see me.*"

Hebrews 10:37: For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry

Then we shall "see him as he is" and be forever with Him.

**Amen!**