

Do you know what Joy is? Not entertainment. Joy. We get to think about joy today.

In the absence of Jesus, we live rejoicing in His name.

By John 16, Jesus has been with His disciples for three years.

They are learning to depend upon Him for truth, hope for salvation, and life everlasting.

But now He is telling them that He is leaving.

We have seen, even from the first chapter, that John is showing us that Jesus is God Himself come in the flesh.

John 1:1-3 Jesus is God, the Word of God, with God, the agent of creation.

John 1:14, 18 Jesus shows us God because He is God, the Son of God, of the same essence as God.

John 1:29 What is John the Baptist is saying about Jesus? We will get back to this.

Nathaniel, even after just meeting Jesus sees something unusual. **John 1:49**

In John 2 Jesus calls the Temple, “My Father’s house.”

In John 3 He calls Himself the Son of Man and the Son of God. Messianic titles. **John 3:34-36**

The Samaritan woman in John 4 says, “Come see a man who told me everything I ever did.”

In John 5, Jesus describes Himself as equal with God.

In John 6, Jesus claims resurrection power. **John 6:40** Jesus says, “I am the bread from heaven.”

In John 7 Jesus insists that He came from heaven and is going back to heaven. No mortal does that.

In John 8 Jesus says, “I am from above,” and that He is older than Abraham. Crazy?

John 9:39 Jesus is the judge of all? Only God can be that. And **John 10:17-18**. Who says stuff like that?

In John 11, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. But before He does that... **John 11:25-26**

But then, in chapter 12, Jesus turns His attention toward Jerusalem and His coming death.

He is anointed for His burial. He predicts His death by crucifixion.

He shares a last supper with His disciples. He washes their feet.

And then He begins teaching them, the longest and most intimate teaching of Jesus in the Bible.

It begins with His washing the disciples’ feet in chapter 13 and ends with the High Priestly Prayer of chapter 17.

Several themes dominate this message of Jesus:

1. Jesus’ relationship with His Father.
2. The importance of obeying Jesus in order to glorify the Father.
3. The identity and ministry of the Holy Spirit.
4. The fact that Jesus is soon to leave this world.
5. The certainty of persecution and the difficulty of following Jesus.

As Jesus now closes His teaching with His disciples, He does so in an intriguing way.

He is telling them that He is leaving.

He is telling them of coming persecution.

All the while He is speaking about joy and rejoicing.

vs. 20 “your grief will be turned to joy”

vs. 21 “pain” turning to “joy”

vs. 22 “your heart will rejoice” “joy”

vs. 24 “your joy may be made full”

vs. 33 Joy is not mentioned, but the idea is present. “peace” “courage”

I. We live now in the temporary physical absence of Jesus.

John 16:16-22

Jesus is here telling His disciples again that He is leaving them.

He is telling them that He is leaving and then He will come back. (vs. 16)

He is explaining that He is going to the Father (vs. 17)

They are befuddled about what He is saying. (vs. 18)

He repeats His message again, but still cryptically. (vs. 19)

He describes the world’s rejoicing, their grief, then their subsequent joy. (vs. 20)

He compares all this to childbirth. (vs. 21)

He tells them that ultimately their joy will be forever. (vs. 22)

What is Jesus talking about?

Well, in hindsight, we now know.

Jesus is speaking of His Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension.

He is leaving and this corrupt world system will love it that He's dead.

Jesus, God Himself in the flesh, makes those who don't believe feel guilty, jealous, and angry.

Their plot to kill Him will succeed and then they certainly don't want to see Him anymore.

But His disciples will see Him again because He will rise from the dead.

Of course He will. He is the life giver.

He has the keys for Hell and death itself. Death could not hold Him.

And now He has gone to be with the Father and reigns in heaven as our High Priest and King.

And He is coming again as judge and our mighty warrior.

Just as the disciples learned about sorrow and joy in His death and resurrection,

So we now learn about sorrow and joy as we wait for His second coming in power.

In verse 20 we read that "grief will be turned to joy."

In the next verse we read a metaphor. This is all like a woman having a baby.

We read this same metaphor in Matthew 24:8 and Mark 13:8 in reference to Jesus coming again.

This leads to an important discovery about how joy works.

Christian joy, we discover in the Bible, always begins with a promise and then anticipation.

It is essential apparently, for the joy to be full, that we go through a period of sadness before its fullness.

This is obvious in most good novels.

There must be darkness and tension before all is resolved in happiness.

If not, the happy conclusion is incomplete.

Lord of the Rings: Frodo and Sam finish in peaceful joy because of what they went through together.

It is so important for us to understand this now as we go through all kinds of sadness.

The sadness is important because ultimately Jesus will rescue us from it. For this reason, we rejoice.

But that is not all. Jesus has more that adds to our joy.

II. The Father loves to answer the prayers of those who love Jesus.

John 16:23-28

Ask the Father for anything in Jesus' name. Jesus says it three times. (vss. 23, 24, 26)

Why?

vs. 23 Because He will give you what you ask for. We will return to this in a minute.

vs. 24 Because He wants to make your joy full.

vs. 27 Because the Father loves you; not just Jesus but the Father as well.

It isn't like Jesus has to try to talk the Father into giving you what you want.

Your Father in heaven wants to bless you! (Matthew 7:11)

vs. 28 Because Jesus is with the Father.

You have an advocate before the Father. (Job 16:19, 1 John 2:1)

Jesus is your intermediary with the Father because you are His... not Mary, a saint, or an angel.

Christian brother, sister, do you understand what Jesus is here saying?

I find that many Christians actually feel like God needs to be talked into answering our prayers.

As if He's up in heaven really busy and not interested in helping you.

Like God has other, more important things to do, like running the universe or managing President Trump.

So, we gotta keep praying so as to somehow finally get his attention.

It's like being on the phone with an IRS agent. It's hours before you find someone to help you.

I think of Elijah and his battle with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

Here he is as the prophets of Baal are trying to get Baal to answer. **1 Kings 18:27**

You see? He is mocking them about their gods because Elijah knows that the Lord God is not like this.

No. As Jesus is teaching us, the Father who loves you wants to answer your prayers.

And the Father who loves you is able to answer all of your prayers. He can give you whatever you want.

So, when I pray, why don't I get what I want?

Well now, we get back to the Father who loves you.

Those of you who have kids or have had kids; do you give them whatever they want?

Even if you have all the power to do so, do you give them whatever they want?

I am not speaking here to grandparents.

God is never called our grandfather.

Parents, why don't you give your children whatever they want?

You see? That is what God is doing.

Sometimes He waits to answer our prayers until the time is just right.

Sometimes He waits until we are asking with the right heart.

To pray in Jesus' name is to pray the way that Jesus would pray with the standing Jesus gives.

Sometimes He says "no" because the thing we are asking for is not a good thing for us.

Sometimes He does something else because there is something more important that we need to learn.

So, pray. Because if you don't pray, He cannot do any of this as effectively.

And if you don't pray, He cannot answer your prayers.

And remember your prayers so that you know when He answers and can rejoice in your father who loves you.

III. "You will have tribulation, but take courage, Jesus has overcome the world."

John 16:29-33

In verses 29-30 the disciples now think that they understand what Jesus is saying.

Do they? Maybe.

They have figured out that because He came from God, He is going back to God.

Ok, they might understand maybe 10% of Jesus teaching in the moment.

So, Jesus finishes with a warning that becomes an encouragement.

The warning: They will be scattered and persecuted.

This is what happened after the Crucifixion.

This is what happened to the disciples as we read in the book of Acts.

This is what has been happening to true followers of Jesus for 2,000 years.

Verse 33 really carries the burden of Jesus' message to the disciples then and to us now.

There are four steps in His message.

1. In Jesus we have peace.

In the New Testament we learn that this peace that Jesus gives has three facets.

We have peace with God where once we were enemies. (Romans 3-8)

We have peace in ourselves because the Spirit lives in us. (Galatians 5:22, Philippians 4:7-9)

You are really forgiven, even when people don't forgive. Only God can do that.

We have peace with others who love Jesus. (Ephesians 2-4, Colossians 3:15)

2. In the world we will have tribulation.

"Tribulation" is the suffering of God's people in this corrupt and ungodly world.

Tribulation is required for those who follow Jesus. He suffered. We suffer. **Philippians 3:8-11**

Rich Mullins about Jesus, 'The world can't stand what it can't own, and it can't own You...'

3. Take courage.

Courage is not fearlessness. Courage is facing your fears with faith in the Lord.

We see this throughout the Bible, in Abraham, in Moses, in David, in Daniel.

We see it depicted in Revelation in those called overcomers who follow the Lamb.

In the face of sickness, struggle, persecution, they keep trusting and following the Lamb to glory.

4. Jesus has overcome the world.

He is the ultimate overcomer. We follow Him and live by His pattern all the way home.

Philippians 2:5-11 Rejoice; You know the Savior. You know His path. You know His destination.