

Sorrow & Joy from God's Perspective

John 16:16-22

16 "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father."

17 Then some of His disciples said among themselves, "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 go to the Father'?" 18 They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is saying."

19 Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'? 20 Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. NKJV

I know that it might seem like we have traveled this ground before. And in a way we have.

Jn 14:1 (NKJV) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

But Jesus is rather building upon what He has already taught them. He keeps laying another course of assurances like bricks to fortify their faith. Remember He told them I have told you these things before hand. Now He gets a little more specific.

He talks not about the sorrow and perplexity they now have but what will befall them when He is crucified, when He is put to death. Then they will have great sorrow. For as long as He was not captured and crucified they had hope, but when they place Him in the tomb, great sorrow will flood over them.

But adding insult to injury, the world will not be sorrowful. But they will rejoice when they have finally put Him to death. Their plan will have succeed and they will be victorious, and joy will flood over the enemies of Jesus.

This will not be the first nor the last time when the enemies of God will rejoice while the people of God mourn in great heaviness and bitter despair. But then good has never went unopposed. And what man or woman's faith has gone untried.

There are great lessons to be learned here about joy and sorrow, about victory and loss, about faith and fear. Let these words to the apostles find a home in our hearts as we face our own set of sorrows, fear and loss.

- I. Did they really understand?
 - A. 16 "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father." 17 Then some of His disciples said among themselves, "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 go to the Father'?" 18 They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is saying."
 - B. They did not understand because they did not know what was ahead.
 - C. They did not understand because they had their own plans.
 - D. They did not understand but they would, and that very soon.
- II. God knows where we are in our thinking even we do not.
 - A. 19 Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'?"
 - B. Their thoughts are racing in their minds as Jesus speaks to them but nothing seems to make sense.
 - C. They are ashamed to ask, they don't want to appear to not know what He is saying.
 - D. But Jesus is already aware of their thoughts.
 - 1. He knew them better than they did themselves.
 - 2. He not only knew their questions but He knew why they would ask.
- III. They are going to weep while the world rejoices.
 - A. Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice
 - B. Jesus is referring to His arrest, trial and crucifixion and death that was almost upon Him.
 - C. This would bring great distress and sorrow to the apostles.
 - 1. They would be filled with sorrow for His sufferings.
 - 2. They would be filled with sorrow for the cause of which they were a part.
 - 3. They would be filled with sorrow for the plans they now abandon because their was not way they could not be fulfilled.
 - 4. They would be filled with sorrow and fear for now their own safety would be in question.

- D. So they will weep and be filled with anguish and sorrow.
- E. But the world will rejoice.
 - 1. Inspired by Satan, the great adversary of Jesus, the world would rejoice that Jesus had been done away with.
 - 2. They would be glad that His message was silenced.
 - 3. No longer would He be there to question their actions and motives.
 - 4. They rejoiced that His light was put out and they could continue in darkness.
 - 5. They would rejoice that they now could continue in their positions of power over the people.
 - 6. No longer would they be envious that Jesus was drawing multitudes while they were neglected.

IV. But the sorrow of the apostles would be transformed into joy.

- A. But your sorrow will be turned into joy
- B. It is not that joy would replace their sorrow.
- C. It was that the very thing that brought such heaviness upon them would be the source of their joy.
 - 1. His death would be turned from a thing of sorrow to a subject of joy.
 - 2. They would come to realize that His death had finished God's great plan began before the world was created.
 - 3. Those Old Testament passages would be brought to mind that proved that Jesus must suffer and die and be raised again.
 - 4. That is why I have a hard time being sad on Good Friday.
 - 5. It seems that God won the victory there in that my sins were done away with on the cross.
 - 6. It gives full display to the love that He had for us, for He went all the way to the cross, to death for you and for me.
 - 7. I cannot be sad about that.
- D. Also their sorrow would be turned to joy for He would not stay dead.
 - 1. They had no idea, even though He had told them, that God would get the victory in this way.
 - 2. They could have never dreamed it, but they accepted it when He showed Himself to them on the third day.

3. Listen to the joy of the women as they come to the disciples to them of His resurrection.
 4. Listen to the two who return immediately from Emmaus to tell the others that Jesus was no longer dead, but that they had talked with them as they walked along the road.
- E. What kind of joy was this.
1. It was not the joy you get by eating your favorite dessert.
 2. It is a joy that splits your mind and gives that rush that you cannot contain.
- V. It was the type of joy that you cannot lose.
- A. Your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.
 - B. It is joy from the heart.
 - C. No one can take it away.
 1. As the song goes, “the world didn’t give it to me and the world can’t take it away.”
 2. It is a God given joy.
 3. 1Pe 1:8 (NKJV) whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

Oh the power and the wisdom of God. That He can take the worst events and turn them into times of rejoicing. Have you experienced that in your life?

Chuck Colson did. In a testimony he gave back in 1993 on the 20th anniversary of Watergate he thanks God for Watergate.

It was from his spending his time in prison he began one of the most successful prison ministries in the world.

If it had not been for Watergate, Chuck Colson would never have been the man he is today.

Have you had a Watergate in your life that you could tell others about.

I have a cd copy of that testimony that I want every family here to today to have a copy of to listen to.