

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Please turn your bibles with me to John 16

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the Gospel of John

And once again, I want to remind you that we are in the portion of John's gospel where Jesus is hours away from being arrested, tried and nailed to a Roman cross.

And He has spent these last few hours – pouring into His disciples.

Preparing them for what was about to happen

We have seen Jesus give His disciples promises to comfort them

He had made the announcement that He was going to leave them -

(Don't focus on the temporal – focus on the eternal)

I go to prepare a place for you

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

I am going to send the Helper – the Holy Spirit, Who would abide with you forever

Who will equip you to do the work that I called you to do

We have seen Jesus reveal to them about the persecution that is going to await them

Jesus didn't want them to be blindsided about what was about to happen to Him and what was about to happen to them.

The world is going to hate you because of your association to Me.

In our text this morning – Jesus is going to make another proclamation to His disciples and to us as well.

This journey that they are going to take – (the ministry that they were called to do – their Christian walk - and again, I want to emphasize that this includes us) Jesus is going to tell them and us that it is not going to be easy, He going to tell us that in fact, it is going to be painful – for some of us, very painful - and His promise to them and us is that this time of pain, this time of sorrow is only for a moment.

And once this time has passed, great joy awaits us

Let's pray...

I don't know of anybody that doesn't like short cuts

We all like short cuts

We want things now –

We don't want to wait.

We are impatient.

We want to accomplish more in the time that we have.

I would love if Tucson added a loop around the city so that my travel to and from work was reduced by 10 minutes

We are always looking for shortcuts

We are always looking for the faster way or the easier way of getting to where we are going.

Unfortunately, sometimes we bring that mind set into our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Where is the short cut that leads to spiritual maturity?

There has to be a faster way

There has to be an easier way

But the truth is church – there are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity in God

We are not going to get there any faster than God has ordained and God has allowed.

There are no shortcuts with God

It is important that we follow His path, His way, His will, His timing

The bible says that His thought toward us are good and not evil (Jer 29:11)

That God has a purpose that He is working out in our lives

And there is a purpose that God is working out in each one of our lives that is very unique and very individual.

Each one of us has a pathway to spiritual maturity that is unique to our lives and our own circumstances.

So we search out these shortcuts – and because there is no shortcuts, this leads some of us to get discouraged, angry or even jealous.

Think about it – there are no shortcuts that lead into coming into a relationship with Jesus Christ in the first place.

There is no other way to come into a relationship with the God that loved you – other than thru Jesus Christ, His death, His resurrection, His ascension,

His blood is the forgiveness of sins.

There is no other way.

Jesus Christ alone is the author and finisher of our salvation

There are no shortcuts, church – say it with me.

So how do we stop seeking these shortcuts that don't exist????

We need to learn patience; we need to pray for patience.

Paul tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering

Patience comes to us through our abiding relationship with Jesus Christ

And as we walk in the Spirit, we will have more longsuffering in our lives, more patience in our lives.

And it is through this that we will learn to submit to the pathway to spiritual maturity that God has laid for each one of us.

Remember, the destination for the believer is not heaven – the destination for the believer is Christlikeness.

It is being conformed into His image

It is being less of ourselves and more of Him

Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia -

**[Gal 2:20 NKJV] 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

One of the greatest stumbling blocks to our spiritual maturity is impatience.

That is why James reminds us that we are to pray for patience –

**[Jas 1:2-4 NKJV] 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

Our patience is developed through the trial

The testing of our faith leads to perseverance

As we continue to persevere, as God continues to do a work in us and through us – that leads to spiritual maturity.

And unfortunately for us – it is during these times of testing – this is where we are looking for the shortcuts and the way out. And for good reason – none of us want to face the things that we are facing – none of us enjoy trials.

Church -

We are either in the midst of a trial or we are just coming out of a trial or we are about to go into a trial.

We all find ourselves in one of those three places.

And let me add this – as we go through these trial – it is ok to ask why?

Because in asking why? We are acknowledging that God has a purpose and a path for our life.

So when James writes to count it all joy – he is not saying that we should be joyful about the trial – remember, the trial is just a tool that God is using to lead us to spiritual maturity.

James is saying rejoice in the One that is holding the tool –

We can despise the trial and at the say time love the God that allows it.

This is what Jesus is telling His disciples in our text

He is equipping them to handle His crucifixion, His betrayal, His torture, His departure

And Jesus is preparing them – He wants them to know that no matter what they see, no matter what they feel, God is accomplishing His will.

The same goes for our lives – there will be times in our lives where joy is elusive

Times where we are struggling

Times of sorrow

Times when friends and family cannot help or will not help

And it is during this time that God is accomplishing His will in our lives.

Let's look deeper into our text.

[Jhn 16:16-24 NKJV] 16 "A little while(1), and you will not see Me; and again a little while(2), and you will see Me, because I go to the Father."

I had you make a note of the phrase “a little while”

And the reason is – that as you notice – Jesus mentions it twice in verse 16

Let’s talk about the first “little while”

In a few hours Jesus is going to be arrested and hung on a cross.

The disciples are going to go in hiding

For three days – their world is going to be turned upside down – their best friend is no longer going to be with them, He is no longer going to be there to provide for the, to encourage them.

That is until Sunday – when Jesus rose and they saw Him again.

Now, the second little is speaking of a different occasion.

And because of the context of the text – we will see that Jesus will use the illustration of a woman going into labor, many scholars believe that Jesus is referring to His Second Coming. Because when Jesus describes His Second Coming in Matt 24:4-8, He talks to His disciples about the beginning of sorrows – [the Greek is—“the beginning of birth pains”].

However, there is another possibility –

That the second “a little while” refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost

Go back to John 14

**[Jhn 14:15-18 NKJV] 15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 "I will not leave you orphans; **I will come to you.****

Now, here in Ch 16 - Jesus was speaking primarily about His return to the Father ("Because I go to the Father"—John 16:16).

This ties in with what He said back in John 16:10—"Because I go to My Father, and you see Me no more."

But when the Holy Spirit came – because God is One – it was like He never left – that was last week He made the point that it was to their benefit that He return to the Father.

So again, the point is it was going to be a short period, "a little while"

**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."**

Once again, we must put ourselves in the disciples' sandals.

We know the end of the story –

However, one of the things we have to understand is that that the disciples at this time – they did not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to help them out.

They were still looking at Jesus through a different lens

They believed Jesus was the Messiah, however – they didn't see how the cross came into play.

They had different expectations for Jesus

So when Jesus made this statement – it went completely over their head.

I believed they really wanted to understand what Jesus was telling them – however, I think that their confusing simply lead them to a state of frustration.

**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'?"**

These disciples had walked with Jesus for 3.5 years.

Jesus has been teaching them, comforting them, encouraging them for the last few hours – and notice, the disciples don't understand what Jesus is telling them

These guys are having as much of a hard time understanding what Jesus said as we are!

Does Jesus respond by saying, “C’mon guys – what’s wrong with you?”

No, He meets them where they are –

He knows that they are frustrated

He knows that the frustration is leading to anxiety

So He says,

**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.**

In a few hours, the crucifixion is going to crush the disciples.

Their world is going to be turned upside down.

And it is during this time that world is going to celebrate.

But the resurrection would turn the tables.

This is very important church –

What Jesus is saying here in verse 20 and 21, He is stating a principle that is the very ‘soul’ of what it means to “take up our cross and follow Him.”

It is a principle that no true believer in Christ can escape (Jesus certainly didn't)—because it defines what being a Christian (“a follower of Christ”) truly means.

To ignore this principle or to be ignorant of it is to not understand what the Christian life is really all about and the purpose God has for all believers in living it for His glory.

Here is the principle - “God brings joy to our lives, not by substitution, but by transformation

That is why Jesus provides the illustration of childbirth

God does not substitute something else to relieve the mother's pain—instead He uses the very baby that caused the pain to be the very instrument that brings her great joy!

Here is another illustration that might help –

As a parent, one of the major tests that we all go through as a parent, as we raise our children is – what happens when our child breaks or loses his or her favorite toy???

Now, a new parent, the first time it happens – we might hurry up and rush over to the store and buy him/her a new one to replace it.

Or, if the store is too far away or that toy is too expensive, we might even try to replace that toy with a different toy or a different distraction.

We might even say something like, “You want to go get ice-cream?” “You want a Happy Meal?”

This is the principle of substitution.

We substitute the broken or lost thing for something else

Now, if this happens over and over again and we keep substituting everything that causes pain in their lives – the result is immaturity.

The same goes for our spiritual lives -

We cannot mature emotionally or spiritually if somebody is always replacing our 'broken toys'.

It is important to notice -

Jesus did not say that the mother's sorrow (pain) was replaced by joy—but that the sorrow was transformed into joy—the same baby that caused the pain also caused the joy!

And so it is in the Christian life: God takes seemingly impossible situations, adds the miracle of His grace, and transforms trial into triumph - and sorrow into joy—

When we're in hard times, we want to get rid of the thing that is causing so much trouble.

But that is the very thing that God wants to use, to turn our sorrow into joy.

This is a principle we see over and over again in the scriptures

## Look at the life of Joseph -

Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave, and Potiphar put him into prison as a criminal – wrongfully accused of rape; but God transformed that hopeless situation of defeat into victory.

What Joseph's brothers intended for evil God used for good—

The same situation that brought such sorrow into Joseph's life was the very thing God used to bring great joy.

God didn't substitute what was broken – He transformed the situation

## David -

David spent many years running from King Saul

God used that persecution to transform David into more a man of God.

Even Jesus took the cross, a symbol of defeat and shame, and transformed it into a symbol of victory and glory.

Church,

As we abide in Christ & live in this fallen, contrary world, God will work through the inevitable sorrows we experience to produce an even greater joy.

**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.****

In the short term, Jesus was speaking of the cross and His death to be the source of their sorrow, but when they would see Him again after His resurrection—

the cross, the very thing that brought sorrow, would be the very thing that would bring them great joy— in that without the cross, none of us could be saved!

Notice where the joy came from – it was a joy that came from seeing Jesus

**[Psa 16:11 NKJV] 11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence [is] fullness of joy; At Your right hand [are] pleasures forevermore.**

**23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24 "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.**

I had make a note of And in that day – this is referring to the resurrection.

Remember, the disciples were confused earlier to what was Jesus referring to when He said, in a little while –

Here Jesus is telling them – after the Resurrection - all their questions about what He meant would be answered – no longer would they be perplexed.

Instead of wondering what He meant about appearing to them again, they would understand that Jesus had brought them into a brand new relationship to God.

Now, I also had you make a note of the word “ask”

And Jesus uses two different Greek words for “ask”

The first one is used to ask a question

The second one is used to describe the asking that is done in prayer

Jesus has moved from the idea of asking questions of Him, to asking God for your requests in prayer.

And He repeats something that He had told the disciples earlier in the evening – back in ch 14

Yes--He’s going away, back to the Father –

But they will remain, continuing the work He began.

“I’m turning the work over to you.”

“Here’s how you’ll get it done: Ask the Father in My Name & He’ll do it.”

Keep in mind – once again – this isn’t a blank check

Who is Jesus promising this to? His disciples – not the multitudes

And Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew tells us clearly what it means to be His disciple

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV)

**24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me (disciple), let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

The idea is to deny yourself our goals and desires to live for God's glory and the building of His Kingdom.

Being a disciple of Christ is a life of self-denial and service to Jesus as our King.

To take up one's cross not only means to die to self— it also means to be willing to pay any price for Christ's sake.

Therefore we ask for the same things that Jesus would ask for

We are Jesus' representatives doing His business and building His Kingdom here on earth—

and whatever we need to accomplish His work we are to ask the Father for in His name and He (Jesus) promised He would make sure we got whatever we needed to do the work He commissioned us to do.

"God wants to use us as His instruments on the earth to show His power through by being a witness to bring others to Christ. This is all tied in with prayer—

Christ centered prayer.

And when God answers our prayer – guess what?

Our joy will be full – that is the promise

There is nothing that brings a Christian greater joy than answered prayer!

God is not bugged by our prayers – He wants & waits for us to pray.

We don't pray for our joy to be complete, but the fact is, our joy is increased when our prayers are answered.

Every answer to prayer is one more manifestation of the reality of our unique relationship with God, all made possible through the work of Christ.

Let's pray...

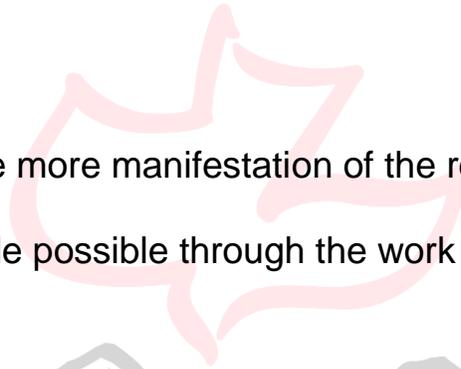
To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



CALVARY  
Santa Cruz

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

The worst possible experience is to grow old as a nonbeliever

As a nonbeliever - you will go from sorrow to sorrow to sorrow, and then move on to an ultimate and eternal sorrow.

As a believer, whatever sorrow we experience, we know will be turned into joy.

When? In a little while.

Amen

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'