

Sunday Morning Message

February 5, 2023

Title – *Your Sorrow Shall Be Turned to Joy – Preparing the Disciples for Life After the Resurrection*

Text – John 16:16 - 33

Congregational Reading – John 16:29 - 33

Introduction

The context of our passage today continues to be in the period between the Last Supper and Jesus' prayer meeting in the Garden of Gethsemane. He is either still in the Upper Room where the Last Supper was held, or at some location in between the Upper Room and the Garden. This long passage, which began way back in chapter thirteen is known as the Upper Room Discourse. Again, we are reminded that John's gospel tends to contain more of Jesus' words than His actions. This message that Jesus taught on the eve of His crucifixion is only given to eleven of the apostles because Judas has already departed from them to betray the Lord. In this discourse He is warning and encouraging the disciples regarding the things that were ahead for all of them in the future. He is preparing them for some dark days.

"4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you." (John 16:4)

Many of the things that Jesus tells them in this passage, He has already alluded to previously, but they needed to be reminded.

Practical Point – God often reminds us of the same principles repeatedly. We are living in a dark world, which causes us at times to forget and even doubt what we know to be true. We need constant reminders.

For example, in this dark world that is full of evil and problems, we sometimes can get very nervous about what is going on, and we need to be reminded that God will never leave us or forsake us, and that His grace will always be sufficient for us, and that eventually, He will come back for us and take us up to Heaven where we will not have any of these earthly difficulties.

Transition

In the conclusion of this Upper Room Discourse, Jesus will continue to encourage and instruct the eleven by making certain promises to them regarding their future.

I. A Promise of a Resurrection and Later Return (vs. 16 – 22)

Note on v. 20 from John Phillips:

Nothing more terribly reveals this world for what it is than this statement of the Lord, “The world shall rejoice.” Peter would go out and weep bitterly. All of them would shed tears over the murder of their beloved master. But the world would rejoice. Stripped of its mask, the world’s hatred for God and his Son is revealed. Worse, it was the religious authorities who took the lead in mocking Christ. Let any believer who is tempted to make friends with this world remember how it responded to the cross.¹

Note on vs. 20 – 21 from Warren Wiersbe – “A Principle to Grasp:”

The principle is simply this: God brings joy to our lives, not by substitution, but by transformation. His illustration of the woman giving birth makes this clear. *The same baby that caused the pain also caused the joy.* In birth, God does not substitute something else to relieve the mother’s pain. Instead, He uses what is there already but transforms it.

Every parent knows what it is like to have an unhappy child because a toy is broken or a playmate has gone home. The parent can do one of two things: substitute something else for the broken toy or absent friend, or transform the situation into a new experience for the unhappy child. If Mother always gets a new toy for the child each time a toy is broken, that child will grow up expecting every problem to be solved by substitution. If Mother always phones another playmate and invites him or her over, the child will grow up expecting people to come to his rescue whenever there is a crisis. The result either way is a spoiled child who will not be able to cope with reality.

The way of substitution for solving problems is the way of immaturity. The way of transformation is the way of faith and maturity. We cannot mature emotionally or spiritually if somebody is always replacing our broken toys.

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. “The Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing” (Deut. 23:5; see Neh. 13:2).²

What Wiersbe is saying is that Christian maturity teaches us that God’s grace can take the painful situations of this life and ultimately transform them into a joy that we could never have experienced without the pain.

Jesus had already warned the disciples that the crucifixion was coming:

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Jn 16:20.

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 363–364.

"1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." (Matthew 26:1-2)

But He had also previously promised them that three days after the crucifixion He would be resurrected from the dead. It is clear from the Scriptures that they did not understand what He was saying.

"31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." (Mark 8:31)

"31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. 32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." (Mark 9:31-32)

"33 Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: 34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again." (Mark 10:33-34)

"31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. 32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: 33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. 34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." (Luke 18:31-34)

Here again in this Upper Room Discourse, Jesus is reminding the disciples again of the coming crucifixion, but He is also encouraging them regarding the resurrection after three days.

He tells them that they will be extremely sorrowful when Jesus is betrayed, beaten, and crucified, but their sorrow will be turned to joy when they see Him risen from the dead.

There is also an illusion here to the time when Jesus would be taken away from them after the resurrection when He ascended into Heaven. They were also very sorrowful when that happened, but their joy would return because He sent the Holy Spirit to stay with them to comfort them, correct them when necessary, and to direct and guide them into all truth.

Jesus promises that the disciples would see Him again.

He promises us that we will see Him someday:

"1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3)

Not only will we see Him, but we will also see all the other people in our lives that have departed from here and are now with Him in Heaven.

The great truth from this passage is that the pain and sorrow that is the result of living in this dark and sinful world is only temporary. There is coming a day, maybe very soon, when we will see Jesus, face to face, and all the problems associated with life on this earth will in the past.

J. Vernon McGee put it this way: "The joy of His presence will overwhelm any sorrow we may have had down here."³

II. A Promise of a Powerful Prayer Life (vs. 23 – 28)

The word, "ask," in these verses means more than just asking God to do something for you or give you something; it can also mean to ask questions. The disciples had been asking the Lord a lot of questions, but He would no longer be with them soon. The Father would send the Comforter who give them the answers that they needed. Remember, He (the Holy Spirit) would guide them into all truth (John 16:13).

Jesus is also teaching the disciples here that because He would no longer be present with them after He ascends up into Heaven, they would no longer be asking Him to do things for them, they would be asking the Father directly in His name.

The key phrase here is: "in my name" (vs. 23, 24, 26).

This is a very interesting phrase used often in the gospels:

*"5 And whoso shall receive one such little child **in my name** receiveth me. ... 20 For where two or three are gathered together **in my name**, there am I in the midst of them."* (Matthew 18:5, 20)

³ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., vol. 4 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 475.

*"41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink **in my name**, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." (Mark 9:41)*

*26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send **in my name**, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26)*

This phrase is very familiar in John's Gospel, particularly in reference to prayer:

*"13 And whatsoever ye shall ask **in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing **in my name**, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)*

*"16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father **in my name**, he may give it you." (John 15:16)*

What does it mean to ask for something "in Jesus' name?"

It is not some kind of a magic tag we put at the end of our prayers that guarantees we will get what we want.

We are asking for what Jesus would ask. We are acting as His representatives.

Notice a wonderful truth from this passage (v. 27) – the Father loves us because we love His son. We are connected to the Son. When we pray in Jesus' name, we are demonstrating our connection to the Son.

MacArthur says this about it:

"He did not mean asking Him to ask the Father, as if the Father was indifferent to believers, but not to His Son. On the contrary, the Father loves Christ's own. In fact, the Father sent the Son to redeem them and then return. Asking in Jesus' name means simply asking on the basis of His merit, His righteousness, and for whatever would honor and glorify Him so as to build His kingdom."⁴

We pray to the Father, but we are helped by the Holy Spirit:

"26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8:26)

⁴ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1618.

And then the Lord Jesus intercedes to the Father on our behalf:

"5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" (1 Timothy 2:5)

"25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

Practical Point – Take full advantage of this wonderful promise regarding prayer in the Scripture. If we are asking for what Jesus would want us to ask for, which means the prayer request is “according to His will,” and we are also asking as His representative here on the earth, God will give us what we need.

Illustrate – I have been very encouraged by the number of people that have joined us daily for the Noon Zoom prayer meeting, and for the Cottager Prayer Meeting.

III. A Promise of Restoration After Failure (vs. 29 – 33)

Here Jesus predicts that in a very short time these disciples would fail in their faith, shortly after they made a bold declaration of belief.

Is not that typical of all of us. We have our moments of great faith where we see God moving mountains for us, but then they are usually followed by faith failures on our part where we are almost forsaking the Lord altogether.

Illustrate – Peter – “I will die for you Lord.”

Notice that Jesus mentions “peace” in v. 33. We are going to have a great deal of trouble in this world, and we are going to fail often. But be of good cheer. Jesus has paid for your failures, He has overcome your weakness, and He has overcome – conquered – this world. He has won through the blood of His Cross, and we are forever connected with Him through our faith. You and I are going to blow it at times. It’s OK – *"14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."* (Psalm 103:14) He understands our weaknesses, and He loves us anyway. He forgives us, His love for us is unconditional.

There is a great amount of peace in that. Our salvation is not based upon what we have done or will do; it is based upon what He did for us.

Conclusion

These are great promises from the Scripture, but they only apply to those of us who are saved and abiding “in Christ.” Are you saved?