

Sunday, April 17, 2022

This is the fourteenth in a series of sermons on John 13-17 (“The Farewell Discourse”).

1. [Jesus Loves His own \(13:1\)](#) [7/5/2020]
2. [Foot Washing \(13:2-17\)](#) [8/30/2020]
3. [Identifying the Traitor \(13:18-30\)](#) [10/18/2020]
4. [Christ’s Glory and How We Are To Live In His Temporary Absence \(13:31-38\)](#) [12/6/2020]
5. [Preparing a Place \(14:1-4\)](#) [1/31/2021]
6. [The Only Way to the Father \(14:5-7\)](#) [3/21/2021]
7. [Seeing God \(14:8-14\)](#) [5/9/2021]
8. [Peace and Comfort \(14:15-27\)](#) [6/27/2021]
9. [Loving God \(14:28-31\)](#) [8/15/2021]
10. [Abiding in Christ, the True Vine \(15:1-11\)](#)[10/3/2021]
11. [Friends of Christ \(15:12-17\)](#) [11/21/2021]
12. [The Hatred of the World \(15:18- 16:4a\)](#) [1/9/2022]
13. [The Work of the Holy Spirit \(16:4b-15\)](#) [2/27/2022]
14. **Your Sorrow Shall Be Turned into Joy (16:16-24)**
15. Prayer In His Name (16:25-32)
16. He’s Spoken That You Might Have Peace (16:33)  
*The High Priestly Prayer (Intercessory Prayer)*
17. Jesus Prays for Himself (17:1-5)
18. Jesus Prays for His Present People (17:6-19)
19. Jesus Prays for His Future People (17:20-26)

As we go through Jesus’s Farewell Discourse, we are in John 16, and Jesus is making His way through the streets of Jerusalem with His 11 disciples, on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane where He will shortly be arrested. It is Thursday night. He will be crucified on Friday. And He will resurrect on Sunday. [Speaking of resurrection, today is the idolatrous holiday known as “Easter” where phony Christians the world over claim that they are commemorating the resurrection of Jesus. Like I always say, nothing says “resurrection of Jesus” like the Easter Bunny, multi-colored eggs, and chocolate candies. This is the inevitable silliness and frivolity that goes along with a man-made festival. Of course, Jesus never commanded such a thing. On the contrary, He gave a very specific command and ordinance to perform in remembrance of Him - the Lord’s Supper. That said, we should always remember His resurrection, every day, year-round. It is what declares Him to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4), it is the basis of our lively hope (1 Peter 1:3), it confirms our faith (1 Corinthians 15:17), and He was raised for our justification (Romans 4:25).]

In the previous sermon, we had entered a new major section, where Jesus begins to explain some of the benefits of His departure. One of those benefits is the coming of the Comforter, who will reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and who will guide His church into all truth. We went over this last time. Today, I would like to go over the next of these benefits: fulness of joy.

**“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. 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? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 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? 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. 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. 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. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:16-24)

Dividing this into three sections: “A Little While,” “Your Sorrow Shall Be Turned Into Joy,” and “Your Joy May Be Full.”

### A Little While

“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. 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? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.” (John 16:16-18)

Jesus tells them that a couple things are going to happen in “a little while.” Namely, they won’t see Him, and then they will see Him, because He’s going to the Father. And this completely befuddles the apostles. They are beside themselves. Just when it was starting to dawn on them what’s about to happen (i.e., He’s going to die), Jesus tells them this. Hadn’t He just told them a few minutes ago, “I go to my Father, and ye see me no more”? (v. 10). Now He’s telling them that He’s going to go, but they are going to see Him again. What is He talking about? Obviously, He means it in two different senses. I told you last time what He means in verse 10 – once He is glorified, we will never see Him again in His state of humiliation. Here He means something different. And it confuses them. And I thank God that they were confused, because I often get confused, and I’m sure you often get confused. I don’t care how long you’ve been saved – a day, a year, 40 years, 60 years – there is still plenty that you can get confused about. So, they start to talk amongst themselves, just like we often talk amongst ourselves when some confusion arises. Why they didn’t go directly to Jesus when He was right there with them, I do not know. This is the first time since chapter 14 that we hear any talk out of these apostles, and it may be that they were still licking their wounds from their previous interactions. Maybe they didn’t want to ask because they were afraid of what the answer was going to be.

But the question is, what is Jesus talking about here? Commentators seem to be divided among several options: 1. They won't see Him after He has died and is buried, and then they will see Him at His resurrection. 2. They won't see Him after His ascension to heaven, and then they will see Him (with spiritual eyes) when He comes back to abide with them through the Holy Ghost (see John 14:23,28 and Galatians 2:20 - "Christ liveth in me"). 3. They won't see Him after His ascension to heaven, and then they (and all His elect) will see Him when He returns in power and glory at His second advent. And a pretty good argument could be made for each of those three things. But frankly, I don't know why we need to limit it to just one of those things. It all begins when He dies the next day and is resurrected on the third day. It will continue when the Holy Ghost indwells them and all future believers throughout the church age. And it will be consummated when He returns – "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Hebrews 10:37). So, I believe that there are overtones of all three of those things (and even a fourth thing, if we want to include when we see Him if we die before His return). But given the overall context, I think the primary focus here is on the time between His first and second advents.

### **Your Sorrow Shall Be Turned Into Joy**

**"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? 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. 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. 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." (John 16:19-22)**

Even though they didn't ask Him, as God, Jesus knows exactly what is going on here, and He sheds a little bit of light on their confusion. He doesn't answer it directly, like "Here's what I mean when I say 'a little while...'" Rather, He gives them the answer they need to hear. He cuts through all their talk and addresses the real heart issue that they're having – deep down, they are concerned at the sorrow that they're going to have when He leaves them. That's their problem, and that's what He addresses. This is what God does – as we walk around in a haze of confusion, He will go straight to the heart of the matter. This is why, for example, He helps us when we struggle with articulating things in our prayers:

**"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. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (Romans 8:26-27)**

So, He tells them that they’re going to sorrow, the world is going to rejoice, and then their sorrow will be turned into joy. This might let you in on a little bit about the character of God – He wants His loved ones to have joy. He doesn’t just want it, He commands it: “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4). And He doesn’t just command it, He gives it: “The fruit of the Spirit is...joy...” (Galatians 5:22).

Now, there’s an important thing here that I want you to see. If you can nail this down in your mind, it will help you for the rest of your life. And that is, He isn’t saying here that He is merely going to replace the sorrow with joy; He’s saying that the sorrow itself is going to turn into joy! It is the means to the joy! This is so important to understand. When we go through some major affliction, our natural response is, “Take it away! It’s too much! I can’t bear it!” Instead, we ought to be saying, “The Lord is going to turn this into joy. He’s going to turn this into a joy that I never could have experienced without going down this sorrowful path.”

That is what this powerful metaphor of the woman in travail is all about here. I have had opportunity to witness a fair number of births. Most of the time, there is a lot of care and attention that goes to the mother while she’s going through labor. But once that baby is born, all eyes are on the baby. The mother is usually relegated to the background while everyone oohs and aahs. But next time you witness a birth, I want you to keep an eye on the mother’s face – especially when they hand the baby over to her. You’ll see a major transformation from travail to sheer joy. There’s a lot of stuff we can learn from this metaphor. For example, there is a set time for the baby to come, and there’s no stopping it. It’s intense, it’s sharp, it’s painful, and though it may seem like it’s never going to end, it really doesn’t last that long. It’s useful – it isn’t suffering just for the sake of suffering. There is a hope and an expectation that goes along with it – not just that the suffering is simply going to end, but that it’s going to end in joy.

Jesus is giving them a reason to be joyful right now. There’s no reason for them to despair. He will be dead in less than 24 hours, and the wicked world will rejoice at that, but these beloved ones are going to sorrow, and they did sorrow – “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.” (Mark 16:9-10). When they saw Him resurrected, though, they were overcome with joy – “And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?” (Luke 24:41). Have you ever been so joyful about something that you couldn’t believe it was true? That’s how joyful these guys were. In the space of just a few days, they went from weeping and

mourning to exultation. And let me add that His resurrection is a joyous occasion for us, too – in rising, He became “the firstfruits of them that slept.” (1 Corinthians 15:20). His rising from the dead was the pledge and guarantee of a bountiful harvest, that is, the resurrection of them “that are Christ’s at his coming.” (1 Corinthians 15:23). If I may put it like this – part one has happened, and part two is assuredly coming.

These words of Christ here certainly apply to the reaction of His disciples surrounding His death and resurrection, but they also apply to our whole lives – it is a paradigm of our lives. Wicked men continue to temporarily “rejoice to do evil” (Proverbs 2:14) while Jesus is not here – in fact, they’d just as soon that He never come back. They rejoice in the things that we sorrow in – but their joy is “but for a moment” (Job 20:5). We will continue to have times of great sorrow, and times of great joy, as we make our way through this strange land. It all waxes and wanes through all the vicissitudes of life. The apostles’ joy didn’t stop after they had come to terms with the fact that Jesus had risen...but neither did their sorrow. One of the main themes of the New Testament is joy in and through and by suffering. Read the book of Acts. Read the book of Philippians. The message of pure joy in the midst of affliction overflows from those pages. Are you aware that when Paul wrote that joyous epistle to the Philippians, he was writing it as a prisoner in Rome? There will be sorrow and afflictions, but every one of them is calculated by God to bring us joy. This is the life of someone who follows the Lord Jesus Christ: “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” (2 Corinthians 6:10). We have both in this life. If you get bogged down in sorrow and grief, then you’ll only have despair. If you think that you should only be rejoicing and that you need to walk around with a goofy, plastic smile on your face all the time, you’re deluded and won’t be equipped to handle it when reality sets in. Indeed, “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28). And, “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Corinthians 4:17). And, “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” (Hebrews 12:11). That means that the chastening itself isn’t a joyful experience – but we can still count it joy, knowing what the fruit of it is. “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” (James 1:2-3).

Further, this is a steadfast, lasting, eternal joy. Jesus says, “your joy no man taketh from you.” He gives it to us from the moment that the Holy Ghost takes up residence in us. It may not be felt in full force at all times, but it will always be there. Nobody can take our joy from us because it rests on a firm foundation. That is, God’s eternal decrees and promises. In similar language, Jesus says, “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” (John 10:29). Do you understand that you are a gift

that the Father gave to the Son? (I'm speaking to God's elect). And do you understand that "he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love?" (Ephesians 1:4). When you open your Bible to Genesis 1:1 and you read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," you must understand that some stuff happened before that. And one of the things that happened is that you, personally, were on God the Father's mind to choose out of the world to give as a gift to His Son. And in the fulness of time, He sent His Son into the world, made of a woman, in the likeness of men, to live a perfectly obedient life, even unto the death of the cross. Why? To redeem those ones that His Father had given to Him, so we might be adopted as His sons and daughters, and given eternal life. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ... Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (Hebrews 2:10,13). And, having done that, He hasn't left us alone. He hasn't left us as orphans. He's not going to forsake us. He's not going to begin a good work in us and then walk away. (See Philippians 1:6). We see Him (John 16:16) and He sees us (John 16:22) – He has His eye on us. We abide in Him, and He abides in us (John 15:4). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20).

Now I tell you this - these are realities that should always be a joyous thing to contemplate, no matter what your circumstances are, whether you're on the highest mountain or in the lowest valley. These are solid things. These are eternal things. Don't rely on this world to give you joy, because it will always be fleeting, frivolous, and unsatisfying. When you look at the poor, miserable, hopeless, self-absorbed souls on this planet, and the things they do to try to get some temporary joy in their lives, you might conclude that this transgender nonsense going on right now is the only logical conclusion. "Since it's all about me and my feelings, and since I get to define my own truth and reality, if I can just cut off and/or add some body parts, get a new set of pronouns, and convince everyone that the Emperor really does have clothes, then I'll finally have some joy in my life." The only problem is, once all the dust has settled, they're just as miserable as they were when they started. That is the world's joy.

### **Your Joy May Be Full**

**"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:23-24)**

In what day? In the day that "I will see you again." (Verse 22). What does that mean? I think it's talking about the time between His two advents, where the Spirit of Christ dwells in us. In

this context, that's how He comes to see us again. It's that period of time that is characterized by prayer in His name. And what does He mean when He says, "In that day ye shall ask me nothing?" Well, remember that He's been dwelling bodily with His apostles, and they've had access to Him to ask questions for the last three years. If they didn't understand something, they could ask. That is coming to an end, in a few different ways. First, He simply won't be there in bodily form anymore. Second, all these things that they've been asking about will soon become crystal clear to them, and they won't need to ask any more. And third, the Holy Ghost is coming to teach us. That doesn't mean that all communication has been cut off, though! On the contrary, we have a direct line of access to the Father to ask in His name. Lord willing, that will be a major topic in next time's sermon, so I won't say much about that now.

Now, as we've gone through this Farewell Discourse, you may have noticed that Jesus keeps revisiting the same topics. (This is a characteristic of a good teacher). This isn't the first time that He's talked about prayer, and it's not the first time He's talked about joy.

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

**"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7)**

**"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)**

**"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."  
(John 14:28)**

**"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:11)**

I already talked about those verses, so I'm not going to go over all that again. But I will say that He explicitly adds a nuance here in today's passage – fulness of joy is the result of praying in the name of Jesus. (Remember, praying in His name is not a magical phrase that you tack on to the end of a prayer. It means praying under His authority; praying on His merit; praying consistent with Him and His character, His doctrine, and His will; praying with an understanding that He is our Mediator).

I'm going to try to pull all this together for you. Before, only sorrow was filling their hearts (John 16:6), but now, He's telling them how to have joy fill their hearts. He wants us to have fulness of joy, my friends. There is a never-ending supply of joy at our disposal! And we cultivate and maintain that through prayer. In chapter 15, He talked about abiding in Him, bearing fruit, having His words abide in us, glorifying the Father, praying, loving Him, obeying Him, etc. And all that was said so our joy might be full. So, what is it that we should be praying for in His name? I'm not going to dictate or limit what a person ought to be praying for in their private prayers, but if you want to have fulness of joy, it's never going to hurt to ask for those things that Jesus talked about in chapter 15. You don't think you abide in Christ and He in you? Ask for it. You aren't happy with the fruit you bear? Ask. You don't think His words abide in you to the degree you'd like them to? Ask. You don't think you're properly glorifying the Father? Ask. You don't love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and might? Ask. You obey Him out of any other reason than love? Ask. These are all gifts that only God can give, and they end in fulness of joy. Don't we have a promise that if we ask Him for the Holy Spirit, He'll give Him to us? "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

So, we will have sorrow in this life, but it's through that sorrow that God gives us joy. We will be deficient in our walk, but He promises us fulness of joy through answered prayer. It's a continuous cycle of our sorrow turning into joy. But we all know where this is ending up, don't we? "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." (Psalm 126:5). "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psalm 30:5). The day is coming when there is no more sorrow, no more sin, no more pain, no more crying. Your sorrow will be completely and fully and finally and irreversibly and perfectly turned into joy and only joy - the same type of joy that the apostles had when they saw the Lord Jesus risen from the dead.

I can't think of a better way to conclude this sermon than with this passage:

**"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 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: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:3-9)**