

Easter Changes Everything John 16:16-33

[If you are new, we're going through the gospel of John. **We're very creative.** We just go verse by verse through books of the Bible ordinarily!

- We believe that God has spoken in His Word, and that he changes us not through the opinions of a person, but through a proper understanding and application of His Word.
- We are finishing a marvelous section of Scripture called the **Farewell Discourse** (16-33)
- The **final verse** is so amazing (v. **33**). Martin Luther said of it, **“Such a saying as this is worthy to be carried from Rome to Jerusalem on one’s knees.”**
- Christ has overcome the world.
- This is our Lord’s last recorded word to his disciples (in John) before his crucifixion.
- Lets look at this and what he says prior to this triumphant statement]. **Pray.**

It’s a beautiful day and it has been a very nice week. Until this week, **I have heard many of you say (and I have said) something like this recently:**

- **“I can’t wait for Spring!”** (It will be here on Wednesday!)
- **“I’m ready for winter to be gone!”** (Northerners give us the stink eye)
- **“I can’t wait for Spring Break”** (Some of you just got back. Thanks for coming back. My hair went on Spring Break about 20 years ago and never returned!)
- **“I’m tired of being sick!”**
- **Last week: “The good news about springing forward is it’s one less hour of rain!”**

This has been a dreary winter with a lot of sickness, for sure.

Many of the older writers used to talk about how the Lord has written the gospel in the changing of seasons.

**“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone,
but in every leaf in springtime.”**

(Anonymous, often attributed to Luther)

Well, we still need the written gospel to understand the details of the gospel, but Springtime is an illustration of going from death to life, isn’t it?

- It doesn’t explain everything about Jesus and the resurrection, but it does illustrate the good news.
- Winter is cold, dreary; but just hang on.... Springtime is coming!

**In this passage, Jesus comforts his sorrowful disciples
by giving them the promise of Easter.**

V. 16: He says in effect: **“Winter is coming”** (“I’ll be crucified and buried in a little while” v. 16) but hang on... You will **“see me again on Easter Sunday!”** (v. 16)

- He is saying, **“It’s Thursday but Sunday is coming!”**
- In seeing me, your **sorrow will turn to joy**; your **fear will turn to peace.**
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ will soon change everything for these disciples!

- And it should change everything for us.
- Paul says apart from the resurrection, our faith is in vain and we are still in our sins.
- But because Christ has been raised, and in this we rejoice!

The disciples are given the promise of Easter.

- We look back and rejoice in the reality of Easter, and all the blessings that this event has brought us.
- The resurrection inaugurated a whole new covenant, and the promise of a whole new world to come.

In this passage, Jesus says that Easter will bring two particular blessings to the disciples: **(1) joy (v. 16-28); and peace (29-33)**. That's what we're talking about today.

Jesus is concerned for the disciples' emotional well-being.

- He's the Good Shepherd. He cares for his flock.
- The disciples are swamped in sorrow, but Easter Joy and Easter Peace will soon replace it!

Their well being is directly connected to their **understanding**.

- They don't understand everything. They've been **perplexed**.
- But two things will give them a proper understanding: **(1) the resurrection**; and **(2) [what we've already looked at] the Holy Spirit** bringing recall and leading them into to truth – but this work of the Spirit can't happen until Jesus is glorified.
- If we don't have a proper understanding of the gospel, and the world around us, then we too could be swamped in sorrow.
- But Jesus has risen and the Spirit has inspired his word, and as a result we too can live in Easter Joy and Easter Peace!

Two Ways Easter Changes Everything:

#1: From Sorrow to Joy (16:16-28)

Notice two ideas related to our joy:

(A) The Well of Joy: The Resurrection (16-22)

(B) The Way to Experience the Fullness of Joy: Prayer (23-28)

A. The Well of Joy: The Resurrection (16-22)

- One of my favorite verses: "As sorrowful yet always rejoicing" (**2 Cor 6:10**)
- There's a lot to be sorrowful about in this world.
- And I would say that **there's not a day that I'm not disappointed, discouraged, grieved, or sorrowful over something**.
- But Paul says, for the Christian, despite the sorrow, there is a well of joy from which to drink.

- It is the **well of our salvation**. Isaiah says: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” (Isa 12:3)
- **The image of African slaves in cotton fields singing the songs of Zion comes to mind**. Sorrowful yet rejoicing.
 - It’s Paul and Silas singing in prison.
 - Christianity looks at death and sings.
 - How? Because Christ is risen and the best is yet to come – forever.
- What Jesus promises the disciples **happened**; and now we can return to the well of our salvation for **satisfaction, renewal and joy**.
 - Christian, drink deeply from the wells of your salvation.

There are many Christians who believe the gospel, but **don’t use the gospel**.

- They don’t go to the good news daily to be refreshed; and reminded that Jesus has conquered our greatest enemies already!
- Paul tells discouraged Timothy, “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.” (2 Tim 2)
- That is, remember Jesus. Fix your attention on the salvation you have on him, and get up and get to work!

16-17: Throughout this discourse Jesus has been given the disciples details about the events to come. Most of these details concern immediate events, as is the case here in verse 16.

Jesus says, “A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.” (16:16)

- **What does this mean? Sounds sort of like a fortune cookie doesn’t it?!**

The disciples are perplexed, so they talk among themselves:

“¹⁷ So some of his disciples said to one another, “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 am going to the Father’? ¹⁸ So they were saying, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he is talking about.” (16:17-18)

There has been a bit of debate about what Jesus meant here... “Now you see me, now you don’t, but then you will!”

- **Was he talking about ascending to heaven and manifesting himself through the Spirit?**
- **Was he saying in a few weeks I am going to leave this earth and you will see me no longer, until I return at the end of the age?**

These are not good options.

- It’s actually much **simpler** than this.
- And it is quite **plain** in the following verses that Jesus is talking about appearing to the disciples after the resurrection.

- They will see him again – as we will see in **John 20**.

Look at **16:19-20**, as Jesus makes it plain:

¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me’?” ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.

Look at **verse 20**: “**you will weep and lament**” but the world will rejoice.”

- That is, “**the world will rejoice at my crucifixion.**”
- “They will throw their hats in the air in celebration at my death and burial.”
- “You guys will weep.”
 - “You will literally not be able to see me because I will be in a cave, a sepulcher.”
- But then Jesus says, “**but your sorrow will turn into joy.**”
 - **What is this?** It’s the post-resurrection appearance to the disciples.
 - “**I will be put in the tomb, but three days later, I will step out into the sunlight as the vindicated and victorious Son of God!**”
- **Golfers sometimes say, “Every shot makes someone happy.” If it’s a bad shot, the opponent rejoices. If it’s a good shot, the player rejoices. (Sproul)**
 - **Jesus is saying, the world will rejoice at my death, but I will rise and you will go from sorrow to everlasting joy!**

In **John 20:20**: “When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”

When they “see him” everything changes!

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” ²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

All of this “**seeing**” is promised right here in **John 16:16-20**.

Easter means joy. Joy for the disciples, and joy for us.

Application: Sorrow and Joy

- **Have you gone to the well this week to drink?**
- **Have you been sorrowful?**
- **The resurrection doesn’t mean you won’t have sorrow in this life – indeed, Jesus says we will in our passage (v. 33).**

- But it means we can still rejoice. We have hope.
- **It means that we view our sufferings with an eternal perspective...**

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

- Have you lost heart?
- Remember, that in light of eternity, our suffering is “momentary.” And the Lord is using it for our sanctification.
- Jesus says it’s a **“little while.”** This little phrase is often used to describe the amount of time we will suffer in this life.
- Peter uses this phrase in his epistle to describe our suffering: “a little while.”

1 Peter 1:6-8

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for **a little while**, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.”

It doesn't seem like a little while!

- Ten minutes at your favorite restaurant with your friends is a little while.
- Ten minutes in a dentist chair is feels much longer! Ten minutes trying to pass a kidney stone is an eternity!

Saints, we will suffer in this life – **for a little while** – but because of the resurrection, we can still rejoice in the midst of suffering, and we know one day the suffering will cease.

V. 21: Jesus uses an illustration that many of you can relate to – childbirth. (**read**)

- Jesus says, we must push through the pain!
- **I have never been pregnant, but I've had a lot of the symptoms: weight gain, water retention, irritability, strange cravings; sleeplessness;** but many of you ladies can related to this analogy quite well.
- We all get excited at the sight of a newborn, but no one enjoys giving birth!
- **“I love babies!”** I have hear, but I haven't heard anyone say, **“I love birthing!”**

Jesus says, “This is what it’s going to be like, disciples.”

- There will be grief, but you will rejoice when you see me!

- Elsewhere the biblical writers use this analogy to talk about the new creation to come (Rom 8:18ff). This life is like giving birth; but hang on... something glorious is coming!
- Knowing the end helps you get through the middle of the pain.
- The reality of the resurrection has brought us this hope and this joy!

V. 22: No one can take this joy from us ... (read)

- **The world didn't give us this joy, and the world can't take it away!**
- The resurrection brought a whole new era in which gifts such as the Holy Spirit has been given to us.
- **No one can "undo" the resurrection.**
- **It is a historical reality; and therefore no one can "undo our joy."**
- Our joy is as secure as the fact of the resurrection (Rom 8:31ff)

The question is, "Are you dwelling upon the glory of your Savior, as the source of your joy?"

- If your joy is in circumstances, then you will be up and down constantly.
- If your joy is in Christ, then you can rejoice even in times of sorrow (Phil 3:1)
- The fruit of the Spirit is "Love, joy, peace..." That's not the fruit of the flesh... but the fruit of walking by the Spirit.

B. The Way to Experience the Fullness of Joy: Prayer (23-28)

While our joy is rooted in the resurrection, Jesus goes on to see that **there is a way to go about increasing your joy practically: through communion with God.**

23a: "In that day you will ask nothing of me" – that is, the time after the resurrection.

- Jesus is talking about how the disciples asked him for things and answers during his public ministry, but now in his post-resurrection state they will ask the Father in his name.
- The disciples had ask a lot of questions of Jesus, but they had not prayed to him like this.
- So what he tells the disciples is that after the resurrection they have a license to ask the Father anything in his name, and this is how they will experience full joy.

23b: "Whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give it to you"

- **"The Father"** – This does not mean we *can't* pray directly to Jesus, but that ordinarily prayer is addressed the Father in the name of the Son.
- **"Whatever you ask"** – a very general invitation.
 - There's no limit to what the Father may do.
 - "You have not because you ask not"
 - James tells us we need the right motives when we ask, and here Jesus speaks of praying that God may be glorified; but we should indeed ask. (James 4:2-3; cf., Matt 7)
 - Jesus said that we should pray with his word abiding in our heart (**15:16**).

“in my name”

- We come on the basis of Christ’s work for us.
- We come in his name.
- It’s not a magical phrase, but an acknowledgement that we have access to the Father because of the Son.
- **Ephesians 2:18:** “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”
- **I don’t know if you’ve every tried to get in touch with someone important but you have to go through a number of people in order to get access. It was like that in the first century as well.**
- But Christians have direct access to the Father, through Son, by the Spirit.

“he will give it to you” – We have a *giving* Father!

24: And we have a loving Father!

With the completed work of Christ, a new state of affairs will be inaugurated for Jesus’ followers. (**read**)

- Up until now, the disciples have either asked Jesus for things directly or ask the Father for things directly (Morris)
- **What they haven’t done is ask the Father for something in Jesus’ name.**

Jesus says, “Ask and you will receive.... **That your joy may be full”**

- Notice then the purpose of asking and receiving is “that your joy may be full.”
- **Your joy cannot be complete apart from prayer.** This is so important.
- **If you don’t eat; you’ll starve. If you don’t drink; you’ll dehydrate. If you don’t pray you’re joy won’t be full.**
- Joy is vitally important, it’s not a kaboose to the Xian life, sort of a bonus.
- It’s vitally important because if Jesus isn’t your joy, you’ll try to find joy elsewhere. And when you try to find it elsewhere your sorrows multiply (Ps 16).
- Jesus ha stood us the way to experience full joy: communion with God.

Prayerlessness leads to joylessness.

We need not just a right doctrine of Christ;
we also need rich fellowship with Christ.

Application: **Any Christian who is down the dumps should ask themselves the question: “How’s my prayer life?”**

- When was the last time you spent about 2-3 hours reading the Bible, reflecting, maybe journaling and praying?
- Or, the last time, you just went on a prayer walk, thanking the Father for his grace?
 - Charis and Chara go together; gratitude fuels joy
- Do you have a time set aside to pray for yourself, others, church, world?
- Or, prayed for a long time with your Christian brothers and sisters?
- Do you understand prayer as a means to increasing your joy?
- Joblessness is connected to prayerlessness.

25-28: More on Prayer

25: Jesus acknowledges that his ministry has included many parables and other sayings that were difficult to understand.

- He had taught them “**figuratively**” – which means more than an illustration or metaphor; it means that much of his teaching has been somewhat obscure.
- But the “**hour is coming**” – that is the time probably means beyond the post-resurrection appearances, and now includes his glorification (ascension back to the Father) – the beginning of a new era, when the revelation of Jesus will be spoken plainly.

26-27: This “hour” or “day” is about access.

- The Father will be accessible to the disciples, because of the work of Jesus, by the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Notice a new kind of fellowship is possible – that includes not just Jesus and his disciples, but Jesus, the disciples and the Father.
- **Augustine:** “The Son does not ask the Father, but the Father and the Son alike listen to the those who ask.” What access to God we have!

“**The Father himself loves you**” (27a) – because “believing” on Jesus is the way you come into this relationship of love.

- ABBA Father... as a Father has compassion on his children...
- The Son has died and risen for us; the Father loves us; and the Spirit indwells us.
- This glorious relationship is experienced in a powerful and joyful way through prayer.

28: A great summary of Jesus’ incarnation.

- “I come from the Father” – Jesus’ deity
- “I have come into the world” – Jesus’ mission
- “Now I am leaving the world and going to the Father” – His completed the mission
- The humble Son of God came down to earth, fulfilled the Father’s will, and is now exalted at the Father’s right hand.

Because of this, we have the great privilege of communion with God.

- We can go to the Father who loves us, through the Son who died and rose for us, by the Spirit, who indwells us -- and ask!
- And this experience is how we may experience the fullness of joy.
- Everyone is looking for joy – and Jesus gives us the path to the fullness of it.
- Psalm 16:11 – “in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forever more.”

#2: From Fear to Peace (16:29-33)

29-30: The Disciples immediately celebrate Jesus’ “**plain**” teaching.

- They are confident that they understand everything. But they don’t.

- The complete hour of understanding will be later, when the Son is glorified and the Spirit is poured out guiding them into the truth.

31: Jesus says “Do you know believe?” – Jesus is expressing doubt in their achievement. They think they’ve got it, but not yet.

32a: If they understood everything, then they would not scatter in fear at his crucifixion.

- We will see that soon.
- They will be afraid. Peter will cower before a little girl...

32b: Jesus, however, would not cave into fear, but would endure, knowing that the Father would be with him until the end....

- This doesn’t contradict Mark 15:34; Most believe Jesus recited all of Psalm 22, which ends celebrating God’s faithfulness.
- Great hope for us as well – the Father is with us (**2 Timothy 4:17**)

33: Jesus’ final words with his disciples recorded by John before the cross...

It is a word of comfort. ³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Lost

- That “**in me you may have peace.**”
 - Notice this peace is “**in him.**” It’s found only in him, **the Vine.**
 - Peace – **shalom** – not a therapeutic peace, but something better.
 - **It’s an already-not yet peace.**
 - Peace underneath every other kind of peace – “it is well with my soul.”
 - Peace that is promised when all things are made new!
- They would have “**tribulation.**” Jesus tells the truth!
 - It’s not, “If you become a Christian, you will have no more problems!”
 - You will have it... He doesn’t promise health, wealth, and prosperity...
- But Jesus says “**take heart**” – take courage (**Acts 23:11**)
 - **Being a disciple of Jesus is about learning how to experience peace in the midst of trial; despite hostility and rejection.**
- “**I have overcome the world**”
 - While trouble is inevitable, triumph is certain. (1 Cor 15:57)
 - Why? Because Jesus defeated death.
 - **Carson:** “The decisive battle has been waged and won. The world continues its wretched attacks, but those who are in Christ share the victory he has won. They cannot be harmed by the world’s evil, and they know who triumphs in the end.

From this they take heart, and begin to share his peace.”

- **If we are in him, we can have peace.**
 - **We are more than conquerors through him who loved us! (Rom 8:37)**
- **So trust him!**
 - **Commercial with the doctor, “Nervous? Yeah me too.”**
 - **That’s *not* what we hear from Jesus.**
 - **He’s got us.**
 - **He overcame, and through him, we will too.**
- **We can go to hard places and do hard things because he has overcome for us. If he is for us, who can be against us?**
- **He has said these things so that we may have peace.**

What does Jesus talk about in his final words? His **triumph**.

Friday was coming – death;
But Sunday morning was just around the corner – life!

His triumph means *joy* – a joy unlike any other joy;
And it means *peace* – a peace unlike any other peace.

Let’s keep returning to the well of joy and peace – the gospel of the risen Christ.

Let’s seek the Father in prayer in Jesus’ name to experience the fullness of joy.