

**Life in His Name – Part 39**  
**Grief into Joy - John 16:16-24**  
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Intro:**

- This morning we are going to take a look at some of the last things Jesus said to His faithful friends right before He was to be forcibly taken from them, prosecuted, tortured, and crucified. Jesus and His disciples had developed a close relationship and truly loved one another. And their love went beyond normal human love. Jesus was God in the flesh, and what He said were God's very words; in Him was life and all things that are good, right, true, and wonderful.
- Now Jesus was going to be taken from the disciples, and they were devastated and in deep grief. To help them in and through their grief, Jesus explained what would come of what He was to endure, and He promised they would not be alone. He was to send the Holy Spirit to be with them, be in them, and work alongside them.
- He also did say that He would be back, and in the future, they would never be separated again—that they were to anticipate joy, they would have a joy that is permanent and have joy along the way for the asking.
- We all carry with us the burdens of separation and loss, we all have difficulties and painful situations we must walk through, and we all have things anticipated in the future. In our passage this morning, you will learn to harness the power of anticipated joy, trust the promise of permanent joy, and ask for the provision of ongoing joy. Jesus guides us and provides us with encouragement to continue our journeys in confidence that is fueled by joy. You may think that this is too good to be true, but it isn't, and I expect God to do miracles in our hearts and lives this morning as we listen to the words of Jesus and walk through this passage together. The first thing Jesus offers us is to harness the power of anticipated joy.

**Harness the power of anticipated joy**

**John 16:16-22a NIV**

**Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”**

- This was an interesting way to describe His death and resurrection, with the main point being that this state of grief is not permanent, that there will be a time when you will see me again. And secondarily, by describing death and resurrection in these terms, we know that death is not the end, that those who die are behind a “veil,” so to speak. They are not gone, as in forever gone, but they are alive. We just cannot see them at this time, but in the resurrection, we will see them. This knowledge offers us hope while we grieve because of the separation. However, we have hope because of the promise of a restored connection.
- We can see this clearly from our vantage point of living after the resurrection, however, the original disciples were having a problem understanding what Jesus meant at this point.

**John 16:17-22a NIV**

**At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” 18 They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”**

**19 Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’?”**

**20 Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. 21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice,**

- There will be weeping and mourning; God does not spare us from this. But He does promise that there will be future joy, and the difficulties of our present pale in comparison to the joy that is yet to come.

**2 Cor 4:16-18 ESV**

**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.**

- So don't lose heart! The afflictions that we suffer are “light and momentary” compared to the “weight of glory beyond all comparison” that is to come. And the affliction now prepares us to be able to rightly receive what is to come. So, until then, we will receive help to look beyond our current difficulties to the joy that is yet to come, like a mom who endures the pain of labor to gain the joy of a child born into the world.
- This is the same as what Jesus did at the cross.

**Heb 12:2 ESV**

**Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

- Do you know what gave Jesus the power to endure the cross? It was by harnessing the power of anticipated joy. He focused on the joy that was yet to come, and this gave Him the strength to endure until then. This has been the case for Christians throughout history.
- I want you to focus on what is being birthed out of your pain. It could be the development of a mature child to help you get through raising them; it could be a paycheck to help you get through a difficult job, or a better job to help you get through more education or the character you are developing as you struggle through difficulty, or it could be greater joy at a reuniting or of a restoration or the recreation of all things new. Focus on the end, and you will make it through the middle. Harness the power of anticipated joy.
- And if you have a hard time seeing the end, trust in the promise of Jesus of the coming of permanent joy.

**Trust The promise of permanent joy**

**John 16:22 NIV**

**So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice,**

## **and no one will take away your joy.**

- Not only is there great power in the anticipation of seeing Jesus (v. 16), but there will be even greater joy in that Jesus will see you. And this joy that you and I will experience will be joy that no one will or can take away. This is a permanent, lasting, and eternal joy. This is what caused Peter to write to a people who were in perpetual pain and persecution:

### **1 Peter 1:3-9 ESV**

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 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, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

- We are born into a “living hope” through the resurrection of Jesus, and we have an “inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,” which is kept in heaven for us. We may have to go through trials for a time so that our faith may be proven to be genuine. And if our faith is genuine, we will receive praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ comes again. The joy we will receive is a joy that is permanent, guaranteed, and unbounded. Trust the promise of this and let the guarantee of it warm your heart and give you joy. And here is another part that is guaranteed.

### **Rev 21:1-6 ESV**

**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”**

**5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”**

- These words are trustworthy and true. I believe them because I believe in Jesus, and what He says is true and to be trusted. Let yourself focus on these things. Force yourself to focus on these things, and they will help you (see Psalm 42:5, 51:12).
- So, at this point, we can harness the power of anticipated joy, and we can trust the promise of permanent joy, and then Jesus tells us to ask for ongoing joy.

## **Ask for the provision of ongoing joy**

### **John 16:23-24 NIV**

**In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

- “In that day” is the time between the ascension and the return of Christ. This is the time we are living in. Because Jesus is with the Father, and we are in Jesus, and Jesus is in us, we ask the Father for what we need, for joy in the name of Jesus (this is why Christians pray “in the name of Jesus”). And this “whatever” is what we need today in Jesus, that our joy “may be complete.” This is a process word and ongoing process of making our joy complete, refilling us with ongoing joy.
- This is like an airplane being refueled mid-flight. On our way in anticipation of permanent, abundant joy, we are to ask for ongoing joy that will sustain us until we reach our final destination. We are to ask the Father for this. And it may come in the form of strength, or perspective, or companionship, or hope, or a gift of something, or a relief of something or someone. Do you pray for joy? Do you ask for it? And are you willing to receive it in a way that your Father sees fit to give to you? Ask, and you will receive, and your joy will be made full.

### **Conclusion**

- We are going to conclude with an invitation for a special time of prayer for all who need a reinfusion of joy. We are going to ask the Father together, in the name of Jesus, to give this to you. And I am not sure what God will do, but I trust that He will do something.
- Along with this, please remember what we heard today: harness the power of anticipated joy, and trust the promise of permanent joy, and keep asking for the provision of ongoing joy.
- Invitation for prayer and closing prayer.

### **Questions for further growth**

1. Is there anything in your life that is a grief and burden to you?
2. How can you harness the power of anticipated joy? What do you need to focus on?
3. What are you most looking forward to when all things are made new?
4. Ask the Father in Jesus's name for ongoing joy. Perhaps pray right now and have others pray for you as well, and trust that God will answer your prayer.