Solidarity Sunday

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Date: 13 November 2022

[0:00] While Jesus and his disciples were about to cross over the Kidron Valley and make their way up to the Mount of Olives, into the darkness of Gethsemane's garden, Jesus resumes a conversational style of communication with his disciples.

The conversation brings in a lot of concern for the disciples because in verse 16 Jesus says, A little while you will see me no more, and a little while you will see me.
The disciples immediately pick up the phrase, a little while, and the imperative tense here says that they kept on asking themselves as to what Jesus meant by these words.
The key to understand verse 16 is found in the Greek language. A little while you shall not see me.
The Greek for see in this phrase is theorite, meaning to be a spectator, to view mentally, to view attentively.
[1:18] During the interval between Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples lost their faith, spiritual vision, and thus could not see Jesus attentively.

Secondly, a little while, you shall see me. The Greek word for see in this phrase is obseste, meaning to comprehend.
The disciples after the resurrection began to comprehend Jesus more in a spiritual sense. So Jesus is actually telling his disciples, as you are not aware of the times, you shall not attentively view me.
But when you later realize the times, you will comprehend me. Jesus explains to his disciples that they would experience a time of mourning and grieving, while the world will rejoice to see the end of Jesus.
However, Jesus says, Your sorrow will be turned into joy, after bearing all the hardships, the trials, and tribulations.
[2:39] Two things have to be noted here. Number one, nowhere does Jesus say that their sorrows would be replaced by joy.

Rather, they will have sorrows and then follows joy. The experience, secondly, the experience of joy is based on Jesus seeing his disciples.
Jesus seeing them after the post-resurrection appearances. And here, the kind of atmosphere that is created between Jesus and the disciples.
For the disciples, Jesus happens to be or begins to be the person who they could have comfort.
Jesus, through his name, through his understanding, becomes a source where he touches them, he holds them, he gives them the assurance of grace, and he loves them.
Yes, in his name, Jesus becomes the means of joy. And to pray in Jesus' name means an acceptance of the process by which God works, and in which Jesus relied upon.
[4:03] That process is the cross and the resurrection. That is, a cross which represents the end, the hopelessness of everything else, and a resurrection beyond it, to bring in victory.

As Jesus teaches these, he tells his disciples that the hour has come, when they in the world will have tribulations. Tribulation, the Greek word, thilipsis, has the idea of pressure.
Being pressed hard, the disciples of Jesus were called on the carpet by the Jewish Sanhedrin, and put under immense pressure.
They were pressed hard to stop teaching in Jesus' name. They were arrested more than once and beaten up. Except for the elder John in exile, all the disciples were martyred.
This was the tribulation of the disciples. So does it mean that the end result of being a disciple of Jesus is failure?
[5:13] Not so. Jesus says, Take courage, for in me you have peace. Verse 33 He promises a peace which passes all understanding.

An understanding to coexist with tribulations and disturbances. It is a peace which is realized in and through conflict and struggle.

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Tribulation will not be replaced by joy. But in Christ we experience peace in these challenging situations with the assurance of overcoming these tribulations like Jesus conquered the world on the cross.
Yes, in Jesus we are touched. We are held. We are assured of grace. We are loved.
We are comforted. My peace I give to you. I am. I am. I am. I am. I am.
[6:23] I am. I am. I am. I am. I am. I am. I am. I am. I am. I am. comfort, status, honour, pride, wealth and so on.

We also see people, nations that are struggling to survive. Those who were once free are now refugees.
They now struggle for food and shelter. Very few have come to help. Very few walk along.
Elsewhere many Christians are discriminated and oppressed based on their caste. They are identified as Rice Christians that is teased for converting to Christianity because of rice.
There is a growing division based on religion. Church structures and services are obstructed.
[7:28] There are times members are beaten up by the other dominant. I live in a society where we hear the cries of many young girls in the clutches of human trafficking.

Little children deprived of better education because of their community. Young widows living in uncertainty and are not sure of the next meal for their children.
The list can go on. Looking at our realities we could say, hearts have become heavy.
Cries have stopped. Only silence has remained. Seldom there are acts of assistance and justice.
Many are pressed hard and are choking. The early Christians too had their own share of tribulation.
They were burned to death.
[8:34] They were killed by wild animals for the Roman entertainment. Their bodies were lit up as lights for night games. All for their faith.

But the greatest thing here is the early Christians comprehended Jesus. They comprehended Jesus and they had the courage, the peace to face tribulations.
The assurance that stands then is the same assurance that stands today for those who are pressed hard and are choking.
But note Jesus does not say that their tribulation will be removed by joy. Rather, joy follows tribulation.
Joy indeed is based on the martyrdom of Jesus' disciples and others who followed Jesus. It brought the universal church.
[9:43] Today we need to ask ourselves, have we not analysed the times to attentively consider Jesus? Or have we understood the times to comprehend Jesus?

Or how does the church, the very body of Christ, tend to see Jesus? Or how does the church see the world?
When Jesus sees his disciples, he brings joy in the midst of sorrow. Let us ask ourselves, has the church left?
Or is the church still present in this society, allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell and breathe through to say, take courage.
The peace of Jesus Christ is given to you in the midst of sorrow and suffering. Eleanor Roosevelt says, it isn't enough to talk about peace.
[10:53] One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it. There is more that needs to be done.

There are many more who still need to realise to shift from being a mere spectator to being a provider of peace of Jesus Christ, for which it is imperative to dwell in Christ, in the midst of a hostile situation, in the midst of other powers and tribulations.
Therefore, it is compulsory that we need to pray to the Father in Jesus' name, which gives us wisdom to walk in the ways of the Lord and to be strengthened to experience joy in our tribulations.
The assurance lies in Jesus' very own victory over suffering and death. The peace of God, which passes all understanding, come through the Church by touching, by holding, by praying, by being there, giving the assurance of grace, loving them, comforting them, so that the ever-transforming power of Jesus Christ may prevail in the many lives of those experiencing tribulation.
My peace, I give to you. Have courage in this world. May the good God be with us and bless us.
[12:47] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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