

# Your sorrow will turn to joy

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Preacher: Dave Bott

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Here we go, John chapter 16. A little while and you will see me no longer. And again a little while and you will see me. So some of his disciples said to one another, what is this that he says to us?

A little while and you'll not see me and a little while and you will see me because I'm going to the Father. So they were saying, what does he mean by a little while?

We do not know what he is talking about. 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?

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.

When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come. But when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

[ 1 : 1 9 ] So also you have sorrow now but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you.

In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full.

I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father.

In that day you will ask in my name and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf. For the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

[ 2 : 2 3 ] I came from the Father and have come into the world and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father. His disciples said, Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech.

Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you. This is why we believe that you came from God. Jesus answered them, Do you now believe?

Behold, the hour is coming. Indeed, it has come when you will be scattered each to his own home and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone for the Father is with me.

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. We are going to sing a song. During this song is an opportunity for utilisation of our creche.

[ 3 : 35 ] So if you have kids in either of these categories on the screen behind me, then now is the time during this song to head them out. So creche will be over in the hall adjacent to us and the grace kids for those primary grades will be taken out by their leaders across to the cottage on the car part.

I will give a reminder after the sermon to pick up the kids from creche, but the grace kids, those older kids, they will be brought back at the end of their program. Thank you, musicians.

Well, good morning, everyone. My name's Dave. I'm one of the pastors here. If I haven't met you before, a warm welcome to you.

I saw Pete and Michelle come in. Welcome, guys. And CJ, welcome. If there's any other visitors, I hope you can stick around for a cuppa after the service. And John and Angela, it is lovely to see you again and have you back with us.

Yeah, it's wonderful. Praise God for his healing that you can be with us today. Would you pray with me before we come to God's Word? Father, as we just sang, we want to come and trade our sorrows for joy.

[ 5 : 02 ] And Lord, we know that we can only do that because of the altar where you, our Lord Jesus Christ, were sacrificed on our behalf.

Lord, I pray that you would speak to each of us this morning where we're at, search our hearts, and give us and give us true and lasting peace and joy in Christ.

Lord, we need it so that we cherish you above all else, so that we live for you and nothing else. So please speak to us in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Well, what can take away our peace in God?

I think any number of things threaten to take away our peace in God, but let me just point out some of the common ones, some of the big ones. Peace in God is often threatened by our feelings of guilt and shame.

[ 6 : 15 ] What can cleanse us? What can take away our guilt and shame and restore us to feeling right with God, being good with him?

I think peace in God can be threatened by false teaching about God. I was at uni, I was once catching up with a guy who I thought were both Christians, I just wanted to make a friend and were catching up, were chatting, but then after a little while I realised he had an agenda.

He didn't actually think I was a Christian because I hadn't been baptised a second time in the Spirit. And that really rocked me. Am I close to God?

How can we be sure that we have true knowledge of God? I think peace in God is threatened when death confronts us in sickness and other tragedies.

What can overcome such a frightening enemy? Peace in God can be threatened by relational breakdown in the home or the church.

[ 7 : 36 ] what has the power to heal wounds and bring about true confession and forgiveness? What can motivate that? It's quite rare in our world.

Where will we find the strength and wisdom and love to live faithfully in every circumstance we're in?

I think our peace in God can be threatened when we feel like we don't have the resources we need. And I think peace in God is threatened by the alluring promises of this world.

That following God means we're missing out on the threats of this world. It's just too costly to follow Jesus. to give up the things of this world.

What can give us something better than what this world has to offer? There are many formidable things that can threaten our peace in God and our Lord tells us in John 16 this morning that his words are intended to give us true and lasting peace in him even while we live in this world.

[ 9 : 00 ] This is a comforting passage so let's take a look at it. He has been preparing his first disciples for when he has gone as Simon helpfully reminded us.

To remain in his teaching to love one another to be ready to receive hostility from a world that doesn't want God but that we will have the help of the Holy Spirit to change hearts.

And he has one final word to his disciples. After this he's going to pray and then he's going to leave. This is it. This is the end. What is his final instruction?

What is the main thing the disciples and us need to understand? At this point I'm expecting like a manager or coach of a sporting team to give some rallying speech to try and draw out the best from the team.

Or maybe preparing an army like Winston Churchill's famous speech we shall fight on the beaches we shall fight on the landing grounds we shall fight in the fields and in the streets we shall fight in the hills we shall never surrender.

[ 10 : 10 ] I'm expecting something like that. Let's motivate the team. And then verse 16 is what we get. What is that?

What does that mean? John repeats these words three times and at first reading I thought it was almost comical. Okay, we got it the first time John.

But the repetition should alert us to the fact that this is really important. Don't miss this. This is absolutely central.

But then the disciples who have been with Jesus from the very beginning they don't get it. This final word and they don't understand.

That's incredible that they don't get it. what is he talking about? They ask one another. I'm picturing the many times me at school and a teacher gives an instruction and I completely miss it and I'm too embarrassed to ask the teacher so I just turn around and see if the person next to me knows what's going on.

[ 11 : 39 ] Surely they know and none of them get it. But I don't get it. This is Jesus' final, most central instruction and they're totally confused.

Why don't they get it? Is he speaking a riddle that's impossible to solve? Well in verse 25 Jesus does admit that the words he's speaking at the moment are veiled but soon that veil will be lifted.

but the main problem seems to be that they had no room in their expectations for a Christ who would bring about the kingdom of God by suffering and dying and then rising again.

It didn't fit with their expectations. So for us looking back after the cross Jesus' words seem rather obvious.

In a little while the disciples wouldn't see him because that time the next day he would be dead and buried. Then again in a little while the disciples saw him raised to new life.

[ 13 : 01 ] But in and of themselves the apostles the founders of the church did not understand what Christ came to do. But Jesus instructs them then so that later they would understand.

In verses 20 to 22 Jesus describes what was about to happen. Just pause and notice that even now I love this that even now just before his own suffering Christ is focused on his disciples.

He's loving his own to the very end. He speaks of what's about to happen from their perspective what they're going to experience. He's the one who's about to die and he's worried about them.

so that when they look back after the event they can have confidence that Jesus was in full command of the situation.

Truly truly I say to you you will weep and lament but the world will rejoice. Weeping is only ever talked about in John's gospel in connection with death when Lazarus died and when Jesus was crucified.

[ 14 : 28 ] When Jesus is lifted up on the cross his death will divide the world clearly and forever. Now I've never heard of non-Christians throwing a party to celebrate Jesus being killed I've never heard of that but for those three days when he was in the tomb surely the religious leaders who had conspired to bring him down must have been so relieved so happy that he was finally out of the way and people today are still happy when Christianity is out of the way I think we saw it this week we heard the cry against the ABC that they would use such a religious word in their tweet prayers answered as

New South Wales rainfall extinguishes 74 day caravan bush fire one person tweeted back ABC news prayers had nothing to do with it please delete this offensive tweet hashtag freedom from religion and so the ABC changed it our society is relieved and happy if anything remotely to do with Christ is kept out of their lives a lot of our world believes it can have peace when God is out of the way and yet others of us look at the cross and we believe it is our very life the cross divides the world so can I pause and ask are you trying to belong to both

Jesus and the world it's not possible are you trying to have peace in God while at the same time trying to have peace the ways of the world that wants nothing to do with God it's completely incompatible it doesn't work we're going to decide which one offers us true peace and joy what Jesus forewarns his disciples that their lack of understanding of his mission as the Christ will lead them to weep and lament at his death but the world will not have the last laugh your sorrow will turn into joy Jesus says it's going to be like a woman giving birth what happens to the sadness and the pain when giving birth once the mother holds the new life in her arms it is transformed into joy the cause of the sadness and agony is the very thing that results in the deep joy so too for us for the disciples it's not merely that their sorrow will be replaced by something that will give them joy the very thing that causes the sorrow will turn into joy can you imagine the impact of the cross on the disciples before the resurrection and before they had the spirit to help them understand they must have been so confused did

Jesus mean to be killed did he lose they must have felt so alone that they're now leaderless they've got no protection they must have felt so afraid are these authorities going to hunt us down as well they must have been so disillusioned have all God's promises who we thought were going to be fulfilled in this one guy just gone in an instant but Jesus gives this promise I will see you again and no one will take your joy from you the resurrection changes everything his death was on purpose he is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world we are not alone he is alive and he is in charge of heaven and earth for the sake of the church we don't need to fear persecution he's given us new and eternal life that persecution can't touch and

God's promises have all become yes the metaphor of childbirth also picks up Isaiah 26 and other Old Testament passages that speak of the trouble that comes before the Christ brings in God's eternal kingdom let me just read those few verses Isaiah 26 17 to 21 like a pregnant woman who writhes and cries out in her pains when she is near to giving birth so were we because of you oh Lord and hear the change your dead shall live their bodies shall rise you who dwell in the dust awake and sing for joy for your dew is the dew of light and the earth will give birth to the dead come my people enter your chambers and shut your doors behind you hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by for behold the

[ 20 : 45 ] Lord is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity and in verse 23 Jesus uses the phrase in that day in that day is used in the new testament often to refer to the end times of history the time of the eternal age of the kingdom of God here's the point of all this Jesus resurrection is the start of a new age Jesus punishment of your sin happened at the cross and when Jesus was raised to new life your new life in the kingdom began that's why we have the spirit because Christ has already done everything to bring about the kingdom that will never end in that day you will know the father in that day you will have direct access to the father what's new after the resurrection is that

Jesus will speak plainly about the father verse 25 that's because God is most clearly made known by Jesus death and resurrection as John says later in 1 John God is love this is how God showed his love among us he sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him this is love not that we love God but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins you cannot know God apart from the death and resurrection of Jesus I once read about a Muslim woman's story of becoming a Christian and I was really struck by the first line of her story she said this in

Islam there are 99 names for Allah not one of them is father do you realize how arrogant it sounds every time you pray father do you claim that you know God so personally you are so good with him that you can call him your father father but we believe Jesus words in verse 27 let them soak in the father himself loves you if that doesn't give you peace I'm not sure what will the father himself loves you why because you are faithful no because you have loved me says

Jesus and have believed that I came from God he came from the father into the world died and was raised and ascended to the father's side you have loved me and believed that I came from God Jesus death and resurrection has brought us out of the world and into the love of the father making us the children of God who know God truly and so the Christian life is expressed in prayerful dependence on our father as we seek to live for his son we now have direct access to him because Jesus has opened up the way ask and you will receive that your joy may be full his ear is inclined to listen he is wanting to provide

Christ doesn't even need to ask on our behalf the father will listen to us because of what Christ has done but we have direct access through Christ we got to believe this not by measuring our circumstances but by believing that Christ has achieved everything so that we can pray to the father confidently and notice that our own joy is to be part of our motivation ask and you will receive that your joy may be full I think we can often talk about prayer as if it's a religious duty it's the very essence of who we are that we know the father that he is helping us he loves us because of what

[ 26 : 33 ] Christ has done we express our dependence on him every single moment because we want to serve Christ in every single moment have you experienced the joy of receiving what you and others around you need for the gospel to transform your heart and their heart receiving fresh joy that Jesus has washed away my sin so I can have new strength to fight the temptations of the world again receiving insight as you study God's word so that you can know the truth about God receiving deep comfort in the hope of eternal life when sickness and death are near receiving motivation to restore relationships receiving the daily strength and resources we need receiving a better delight in

God that makes the promises of this world and the threats look like nothing Jesus has done it for us he's got us all this in that day because of Jesus death and resurrection we will have new life in knowing the father and having direct access to the father ask and receive that your joy may be full now at this point in the story the disciples think that day has already arrived before the cross now you are speaking plainly now we believe that you came from God because you knew our question in our minds Jesus shows incredible patience with his people here and he keeps loving them by exposing their false grounds of confidence he has just said that it is in that day when the new age of the kingdom comes when he is raised to life it's in that day that they'll have these things but they're claiming it now before the cross they want to bypass the cross and the resurrection they seriously overestimate their understanding they latch on to a superficial piece of evidence of their faith rather than embracing the heart of Jesus mission what Jesus is talking about they completely don't listen to him and so he ironically replies using their own words now you believe behold the hour is coming indeed it has come this will be really soon before the cross in a matter of minutes when you will be scattered and will leave me alone

I think we often think of the apostles as these courageous missionaries and church planners but we need to take a good look at these guys what they were like before the cross and resurrection they're self deceived in their measure of their own understanding they aren't listening they're cowards who run away they did not share one drop of Christ suffering with him a guy called Charles Dodd explains the significance of this in words better than I can say so let me read what he says it is part of the character and genius of the church that its foundation members were discredited men discredited it owed its existence not to their faith courage or virtue but to what

Christ had done for them and this they could never forget that's the church Jesus alone in obedience to the father and with the father support went and got the victory for us Jesus alone won the decisive battle that won the war he did it by himself with the help of the father he wants their faith he wants our faith to rest on truly solid ground what he has done and so he finishes this entire section of teaching with this final word of encouragement 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 you will experience trouble just the general hardship of living in a broken world that awaits

God's final judgment and you experience trouble sometimes when people intentionally attack to try and silence you because you represent Christ you will have trouble but once I am raised whatever trouble you experience in me you will have peace your new life in the kingdom of God in relationship to the father rests on one thing I have conquered the world whatever trouble the world throws at you it is defeated it can't get to the peace and joy we have in our new life in Christ can't get to it I dealt with your sin to bring you out of the world and make you a child of

[ 33 : 37 ] God and the cross now warns those not wanting me that God's final judgment is coming no one and nothing this week or next week can touch the eternal life of peace and joy we have with God because of what Christ has done whatever threatens our peace in God guilt and shame wrong ideas about God broken relationships whatever this world promises and threatens all those things they can't touch the peace we have in God because Christ has conquered he has the victory he will have the victory in the end

Christ has risen we have peace in him let me pray father you know that this world is hard is that the temptations of the world that we live in and the cost of living for you in a world that doesn't want anything to do with you you know that that is hard God but we thank you that our victory in the end doesn't rest on our ability but it rests on what

Christ has already done thank you God thank you Lord Jesus for going to the cross on our behalf thank you father that you loved us so much that you sent your son to die in our place Lord we praise you that you are risen that you are alive and therefore we are alive in you and nothing can touch that Lord I pray that this truth would give us true peace and joy so that we can live another day another week serving you help us as a church to boast only in the cross and the resurrection in Jesus name Amen Amen

Amen Amen