

Joy from the Father

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[0 : 00] Well, you who have endured me for many years know that there's always an interesting outcome! It is usually that I come with an extra full heart.

! For example, I would like to pray and then have you look at the passage and open the passage and study it together with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Let's pray. Our Father God, we are so thankful this morning that you are God and Savior.

And that we are together this morning to exalt the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Savior of the world and someday will be revealed as the supreme ruler and the one who has authority over all things.

We thank you for the ministry of the indwelling Spirit and for the blessing that he is to us as believers this morning as we open this word that you have given to us, sufficient for all that we need.

[1 : 40] And that we may rely upon him to quicken our hearts that seeing in these pages the glory of the Lord Jesus are changed from glory to glory through the Spirit.

And we thank you in advance for what you will do among us. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. At the very beginning of our message this morning, let me tell you that there is going to be a portion of the passage that I will not get to.

And so I want you to anticipate next week. I want you to look just for a moment. Go to John chapter 16, verse 24. One of the things that goes with Bible preaching is taking time to explain the passage that's always true, but also on occasion taking time to explain the passage in the context and frame of the culture that we live in.

And so I want to tell you ahead of time, next week, I'm going to take one of the favorite passages of prosperity televangelists, and I'm going to give you a clear understanding of what the scriptures have to say about what it means to pray in Jesus' name.

We're going to look at that next week. So here we are in John chapter 16, and we are now in verse 16. A little while, and you will see me no longer, and again a little while, and you will see me.

[3 : 21] 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'm going to the Father.

So they were saying, what does he mean, a little while? We do not know what he's talking about. Jesus knew what they wanted to ask him. So he said to them, is this what you are asking yourselves, what I mean?

By saying a little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me? Truly, 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 to joy. I want you to stop just a minute against the background of that passage, and I want you to think with me just for a moment.

I want you to look at me. I do. Please. I want you to look at me. What do you really need, honestly?

[4 : 27] What would you really, really like to have? What would help you? Would it help if you felt better about yourself?

I mean, that's not atypical. People talk about it all the time. I don't feel good about myself, and you know, it's okay. Would you like to feel better about yourself? Or how about this?

Are you looking at me? Because I'm talking to you. How about this? I would like more people to like me. I really would. I'd like more people to like me.

Or, here we go. I would like better grades. I was fishing on a boat Monday, and the guy who was the guide or helper, you know, he shared with me that he'd actually taken senior class four times, and I thought, ha, I'm ahead of you.

I only took junior year once. And I was like, would you like to get better grades? I remember those days. Well, here's another one. How would you like to have more money? I mean, honestly.

[5 : 32] Be real. I mean, would you like to have more money? Or, I would just like to be free from my anxiety and my depression.

Here's Jesus. By the way, do we believe in Jesus as our Savior, as our personal Lord and Savior, and the one who is the greatest blessing of all of our lives? Do we really believe in him?

Amen. Sometimes what we say we believe in and how we act don't connect.

And I want to challenge you this morning to think clearly about the connection between who Jesus is and all of the things that we try to place in his place in our lives.

Our lesson this morning actually has its roots back in John chapter 13, verse 1. And so I want you to turn back there just for a moment. Keep your finger there in 16 because we are coming back to it.

[6 : 43] But in John chapter 13, verse 1, it says, John chapter 13 is the introduction, verse 1, is the introduction to a four-chapter exposition that is referred to by some scholars as the upper room discourse.

In other words, it was a series of lessons and statements that Jesus made during the Last Supper for his disciples in the backdrop or against the backdrop of the fact he knew he was going to be crucified and he let them know he was leaving.

And you can understand their anxiety at that fact. They had put all that they had into following Jesus. And not only that, but they had developed a clear sense of the animosity and the hatred of the Jewish leaders towards Jesus.

And they knew that there was an intention to destroy him and to kill him. And they wondered, well, what's going to happen to us? And here they were in the middle of that.

And Jesus, in his love for them, wants to do the most important thing for them he can. He was going to die for them.

[8 : 11] But here, in the face of the anxiety, in the face of their fear, in the face of their concern, Jesus wanted to comfort his disciples.

And so, as we work our way through the passage, this is what I want you to understand in this four-chapter passage. The comfort that Jesus gave to his disciples and the comfort that he gives to us is all about the person and work of our triune God.

You got that fixed in your mind? If you want to press the sermon together in one little thing, the solution to all of your challenges lies in the person of God.

That's important. Because we're all the time engaged in the effort of stuffing a lot of other things into that place. And then kind of wondering, why am I not satisfied?

Why am I still anxious? Why am I filled with discouragement and depression? And hardship is overwhelming me. I love the songs we sang this morning. By the way, I don't want Emma to sing while I'm preaching, but I thought those words fit.

[9 : 27] You know, it's like, wow, they connect. And so here we are looking at Jesus ministering to his disciples, and he wants them to understand that the characteristic, the substance of what was going to help them through the hours to follow and the remainder of the lives in which all of the ones in the upper room, except for John, were going to die as martyrs.

You think your life's hard? I want you to mark John chapter 14, verse 1, just kind of as a starting point of this a little bit in terms of the issue of the triune God.

And here's Jesus saying, John 14, 1, Let not your hearts be troubled. Point. Just kind of stick it in your mind. We choose to let our hearts be troubled.

Would you write that down? We choose to let our hearts be troubled. It's a conscious choice. Here is Jesus telling us, don't do it.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Why? You believe in God. Believe also in me. We see that John 14, 15 continue this theme of giving us great encouragement.

[10 : 53] But let us come towards the end of this lesson that Jesus is giving to his disciples about why they should be confident and joyful and at peace in the midst of the adversity.

And listen to what he says here in John 16, verse 20. Kind of mark the recurrence of the words related to the issue of joy. John 16, verse 20 says, Your sorrow will be turned to joy.

I will see you again, in verse 22. And your hearts will rejoice. And no one will take your joy from you. And then in verse 24. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full.

Jesus spent four chapters. Or John spent four chapters diving in to the issue of what Jesus taught his disciples. And it is there for us and our value.

And so let me ask you a question as we kind of get into this. And think about this. Would you say, now look at me. Would you say that your life is one that is marked by joy?

[11 : 58] Joy? Fair question? Is your life one that is marked by joy? I was reading an article about an employer that has put together 20 questions that he uses to find out whether an individual, a candidate, is going to succeed in his company.

One of the first ones is this. And he said that he can usually tell whether a person is going to succeed from two questions in particular. The first one is this. What is a privilege?

What is a privilege? Second one is this. Is it important to be on time? Well, we won't go there because I'm not going to be on time this morning. But I'll just kind of let you know ahead of time.

My question to you is, would you say that your life is one that's marked by joy? Now, by the way, don't ask yourself that question. Go to your wife and say, hey, honey.

How am I doing that joy thing? You might practice in the bathroom before you talk to her. But, you know, it's okay. Okay, here we go. I want you to look at the passage.

[13 : 14] And as you pick up there in John chapter 16, verse 16, I push this together going from verse 16 down through about 20.

And I want you to recognize that Jesus demonstrates a perfect care for his disciples. A little while and you will see me no longer.

And again a little while and you will see me. As you begin reading this passage, you may think to yourself, Now, why didn't he make it simpler and clearer? Here he is making a statement during the Last Supper.

And the statement is less than absolutely simplistic in its presentation. I remember reading an outstanding book on preaching that said there are three points to it.

One is this, is be simple, be clear, and be passionate. My wife says there's a fourth one. That has to be short. And I've never figured that one out. Well, that's two signals in one day about how long I'm going to be and I will be on time.

[14:17] Maybe not. Okay, here we go. Here's the point. Jesus is teaching here and he could have made things easier to understand.

I mean, how many of you read that? I got that. That's easy. No? It's a little tough. What's he mean? And we find the disciples were asking the question of themselves and one another.

Verse 17. So some of his disciples said to one another, What is this that he says? Understand that. You're hoping someone in the crowd got it.

And none of them did. And so Jesus knew what they wanted to ask him. So he said to them, Is this what you are asking yourselves?

What I mean by saying a little while and you will not see me. And again, a little while and you will see me. Well, you would think that after Jesus asked the question, he would then make it profoundly simple.

[15:14] Let me give an illustration of that. Remember when he was teaching the crowd about the parable of the sower and the seed, right? And after that parable had been taught, and I have no doubt, it doesn't tell us in the text, but I can just imagine the wise disciples, as they were listening to the teaching of Jesus with their hands folded over the chest, like they're nodding their heads.

I mean, you know, I got that. And so when they got privately away from the crowd, what did they do? Does anybody remember? Jesus, John is having trouble with this.

I understood it, but I thought you might want to explain it for him, right? They just said, Can you help us with this? And you'd think that Jesus would have made their concern something that was understandable by his explanation.

But listen to what he says. Truly, truly, I say to you, you will leap and weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy.

Imagine you at that time listening to those words. Would you have said, Ding, I get it. That was easy. Thank you. No. You look at that and say, Well, that didn't help me.

[16:30] I don't understand that. So here is Jesus giving his final lesson before the cross, and he's still speaking in this poetic and cryptic terminology.

It's no wonder that the disciples didn't get it. And I want you to know that he could have made it plainer. So let's ask ourselves a question.

This is one of the things that as you learn to study the Bible, and here's a little point, one of the purposes of a preacher is to teach God's people how to do it for themselves. Agreed?

So one of the questions you ask yourself is, Why is that there? Why did Jesus not make it clearer? He could have done that, right? Why did he make it a little difficult?

Well, the text doesn't give us clear indication, but when we gather the larger matter of what the Scriptures tell us, we learn several things that I think are worth our attention.

[17:30] For one, Jesus wants us to learn to think more carefully, and sometimes when he doesn't make it just crystal clear at the moment, you are forced to dive into the passage and think about it more carefully.

Why? Why is it there? What's this for me? And Jesus often used parables and imagery in teaching to lead his disciples to think more deeply and more carefully.

I think another reason that we could come to grips with is this, is that untested faith is not strong faith. Believing Jesus and getting out of the boat may seem significant, but it really pales in comparison to the lesson that Peter learned afterwards.

Do you follow that? When he took his eyes off of Jesus, what happened? He was overwhelmed by the circumstances, and he lost control of the moment in his own heart, and down he went.

How many of you have taken your eyes off of Jesus this last week? Did it get messy? Yes, always. And so I want you to understand that sometimes God lets us go through things to test our faith and teach us to rely on him.

[18:45] Furthermore, hard things help us to learn to lean on the Holy Spirit. It is things that are hard to understand that force us to learn to listen more and lean hard on the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

One of the things that, as I think back over 35 years of preaching, has changed over the years in my approach to study is that there was a time where a predominant amount of attention was given to the language and the construction of the text, and that is important.

You can never step away from the flow of the text, but one of the things I've learned is that prayer, prayer, and cross-referencing as the Spirit of God and the cross-references in the passage help you kind of connect things together and fit it.

It takes time. It takes time. I think there's another thing that you have to recognize. Sometimes God recognizes that we need to learn to wait.

I think, just keep your finger there in John and go back with me to Luke 18, verse 34. Luke 18, verse 34. Wouldn't you like to know just exactly what's going to happen for you tomorrow?

[19:57] I do. God's in control. End of discussion. Luke 18, verse 34. Let me read it to you. Here it is. But they understood none of these things. Jesus is talking about his crucifixion, etc.

And says, but they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden. Question, who did the hiding in this case? God did.

Elsewhere, Jesus says, he's praying, he says, I thank you, Father, that you have hidden these things, but you have revealed them to the disciples. You remember on the passage, the road to Emmaus?

Here is Jesus walking with them. I'm Jesus in the flesh. And it says what? Their eyes were holden. I love that little phrase in the King James, and their eyes were holden. You know, they couldn't see.

They didn't get it. And so here we find Jesus ministering to his disciples. And in the midst of the flow of the lesson, he still is speaking in this veiled terminology that ultimately will benefit them and help them understand what to really trust in eventually.

[21:13] So I want you to recognize that if you are here this morning, like the disciples in the face of adversity, and your life is marked by challenges, and you find yourself inclined towards worry, did I miss anybody?

Okay. If you really long for his peace, you must really long for his word. Fix that in your minds.

If you really long for his peace, you must long for his word. Let me say that again because I think it's important. If you long for his peace, you must long for his word.

Now, lest we think writing Bible verses on our hand is really the key, the purpose of the word that we have in our hand is to draw our attention to the person, not just ink, but the person.

And so if you long for peace, you must long for the word. Well, let me come to the second part here, and that is our Savior's greatest help. Here he is speaking to his disciples.

[22:31] They're going to watch him be crucified very shortly, and they are filled with a certain level of anxiety that I got to tell you, as tough as your life is today, you're probably not in the spot that the disciples were that night.

Would you agree with that? I don't think there's anyone here that is uncertain, or at least has reason to believe that they're probably going to be persecuted and killed tomorrow.

I want you to take up verse 20 with me now and look at what Jesus says. It starts out pretty distressing. He's trying to help them, right? Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice.

Well, that's good news. Oh, there we go. But your sorrow will be turned to joy. Yeah, when? I got to tell you, to imagine walking with Christ and not recognize that you're going to have adversity and difficulty, or to listen to someone who proposes that all of the difficulties of life are just a lack of faith on our part, and if you just believed harder and put more money in the offering plate, it would go better.

That's a liar from hell. Got to tell you. Here is Jesus. He said, hey, you are going to be sorry.

[24:02] It is going to be hard, but eventually your sorrow will be turned to joy. And then he uses a beautiful picture. When a woman is giving birth, I've never been through that. I got to tell you that, but I've observed, and I probably better let that one stay right where it is.

Let's get down to the theological stuff here. Verse 22, 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.

What we find here in this text, beginning there in verse 22 and carrying on down through verse 24, is in a sense kind of a distillation of what we found in chapter 14, 15 in particular, in which I would put it this way, the comfort and the encouragement that John gleaned from the lesson that Jesus taught his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion is this.

Jesus would rise again, and Jesus will come again. Look at what he says there. He says, I will see you again. I will see you again.

Hey, listen. The thing you need the most is to see Jesus. The thing that is most important to you in the adversity and trials that you have is your relationship with Christ.

[25:40] He is the one who is your great comforter and your consolation, and your relationship with him is at the very heart of whether or not you are terrified or anxious or uncertain or depressed.

I got to say that, and there's some of you out here that are thinking to yourself, Pastor, that's just spiritual words. It's not real life. Do you hear me? You tell me you believe in Jesus for your salvation, but you don't buy the rest of it.

My little dog, Phoebe, is a classic illustration of the value of relationships. A couple years ago, Judith and I took, we took ourselves camping, but Phoebe went along because we didn't want to leave her in the house by herself.

And camping down at Old Man's Cave in the fall when everybody else has left, we try to avoid the crowds, you know, Memorial Day and Labor Day, we're kind of on the other side of those things. And we were camping in November, and around about 11 o'clock, there was a chorus of coyotes that just decided to light up just down the hill from us.

And it's like, oh, no big deal. And Judith said, what is that? That's coyotes, you know. My little dog was scared, I mean, spitless, okay. I mean, she's about 10 pounds.

[27:02] She's just lunch. That's what it is. And she was quivering like, I've never seen her that anxious in all of her previous life. And she was just about to the point of apoplexy, which is a medical condition.

She was having problems. I got a hold of her, tucked her into my sleeping bag, and she crawled down to the very end. Okay? But I got to tell you, she was better in the bag than she was outside of the bag.

Now, I shouldn't tell you this, but I will. Being who I am and entire sanctification hasn't happened yet, and I'm waiting for that.

Even a year after that, and I won't do it here in the church, but I can tell you, if I would mimic a coyote, that dog would just start shaking like she was dying.

It's like, ah! I've stopped. I've stopped. I've stopped. Don't anybody, don't send me an email. Okay. I've got to tell you, Phoebe's favorite place is wherever the two of us are in a room.

[28 : 24] I didn't tell you about Phoebe for Phoebe's sake. I told you about Phoebe to help you understand that when we understand there is nothing more precious and more prized and more significant and more comforting, more stabilizing in our life than our relationship with the triune God.

Everything else is secondary. You can't mediate and replace Jesus.

You can't entertain and replace Jesus. You can't miss the fact that in the absence of the comfort of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and our triune God, there is no substitute.

the second thing that I want us to see in the passage is the Holy Spirit will be with us.

Now, this is a little tough, but we'll get there. Okay. Verse 23, 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.

[29 : 42] Now, if you go back in your thinking, and I'm not going to take the time this morning to do it, but in John chapter 14 and John chapter 15, this phrase, in that day, is connected to the person of the Holy Spirit.

I got to tell you, we sometimes diminish in our thinking just how valuable our relationship with the Holy Spirit is.

when Jesus said it, you can do nothing. What? What? You can do nothing without me, right?

And he says to the disciples, he says, listen, it's to your benefit that I go away because if I don't go away, you're not getting, you won't have the comforter. So what is it that is of help to us?

It's number one, that I have a relationship with Christ and I know he is risen and I know he's coming again. Secondly, I know that the Holy Spirit is with me and I have great comfort in that fact.

[30 : 48] Third, the Father will answer our prayers to know him more. Look at John chapter 16, verse 24. Until now, you have asked nothing in my name.

Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full. Hey, what's it like to not be a happy person? Does anybody know?

Yeah, I do. I do. In fact, every one of you out here know what it is to not be a happy person. You've had plenty of practice.

I've got to tell you this. Here is Jesus saying, listen, you ask and he will answer. So what do you want?

What do you want? Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full. The idea of your joy being full means this, that you have all and more than you ever imagined was needed.

[31 : 48] Ask that your joy may be full. What do I need? I only need one thing. I need to know the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering.

There's nothing else. Remember what Paul said? He said that I might know him, that I might, what do I want? I want to know him. And so this morning as you look at this text and I step away from it here, I got to tell you that the world is full of false promises and false profits of things that are going to satisfy you.

And there's some of you this morning that are chasing those and you're wondering why your life is just so turmoil filled. God will not let a substitute survive survive do you know why?

Because he doesn't like idols and you're wondering why you're frustrated with the pursuit you have that doesn't have Jesus at the center. He's not in favor of it.

And so let me press it together this way. The Bible is clear that the person of Christ is more precious and satisfying than the presence of Christ. Christ. The person of Christ is more satisfying than the gifts.

[33 : 18] Try that because I saw some of you wrinkle your brow and you're wondering person, presence, presence, he's present. No, I'm talking about gifts. Okay. Okay. The person of Christ is more precious and satisfying than the gifts.

Second, the Bible is also clear that the word of Christ is more satisfying and more settling than anything the world can ever offer. Great peace have they who love thy law and nothing shall offend them.

I got to tell you as I was listening to our singing this morning and one of the things that I am so richly blessed by, oh, I forgot to tell you a little sidebar.

I'll come back to that. But I want you to know that Pastor Shearer has decided that the next book we're going to preach out of is Isaiah and I got to tell you I'm really pumped about that. I've already started studying for it.

Isaiah's the fifth gospel just in case you're wondering. It's in the Old Testament but it's the fifth gospel. That's the way some people, I'm fired up about that. Now where was I? Okay, here we go. Get this point in your minds.

[34 : 28] The word of Christ the word of Christ the word of Christ is what we are comforted by, what we're encouraged by, what we're strengthened by, what we're established by.

I can't help but think about the church's current love affair with what the world has to offer. I see it all over the place.

Here's what Jeremiah chapter 2 verse 13 says. Let me read it to you. For my people have committed two evils.

Jeremiah chapter 2 verse 13. They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Hey, hey, remember what I asked? Would you say that people would say that you're generally a pretty happy person? Huh? Right? There's only one reason to be happy.

[35 : 33] It's not because of who I am or who you are. It's because of Jesus. So when you go around as a grumpy, frumpy person, it's like, hey, you're not seeing Jesus very good.

I'm going to press it all together this way and close. Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life cares deeply about you today.

That's a fact. If you are here this morning and he has blessed you with salvation, he does not want you to live a cloudy and joyless life.

Hey, does that mean you will not have any troubles and challenges? You will. You will. John chapter 16, later he says, in this life you will have, you're going to have hardship, you're going to have difficulty.

But the thing that doesn't change is that the believer who knows Christ has the comfort and the encouragement of a relationship with the living God and is blessed in that relationship.

[36 : 49] And so here you are, the greatest remedy. Now listen to me. The greatest remedy for worry, for depression, for anxiety is nothing less than a clear view of our triune God.

That is a foundational Bible truth. And it is as significant in the theology of Scripture as the fact that salvation is the work of Christ.

in our life. If you are here today and you know Christ, you have all that you need to live a life that is not clouded and broken, but one that looks forward to the day that you are going to see Him face to face.

If you do not know Christ this morning, I can understand. And I'm very sympathetic because here you abide under the cloud of sin and guilt and shame and fear.

You're uncertain of how the story ends. You're striving to place into the God-shaped hole in your heart all kinds of things that will never satisfy.

[38 : 26] And I want to tell you this morning, Jesus died for your sins on the cross. He stands ready to forgive you and to grant you everlasting life.

And do you know what He needs to hear from you? He needs to hear a humble and a broken spirit that says, I'm a mess. I can't save myself.

And I believe you died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins and you rose again. And I take you at your word. Let's close in prayer.

Our Father God, we are overwhelmed when we stop and think about your unfailing love for us.

That as the passage in Romans says, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And we find great satisfaction in the blessing of having relationship with you.

[39 : 38] I pray for those that are here today that do not know the Lord Jesus as their Savior. Some who may be here fully deceived by the enemy, thinking that a childhood confession or probably even showing up is sufficient.

but burdened with the cloud of doubt and shame and guilt and having no remedy, draw them to find the Lord Jesus their Savior.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. As we sing in closing, I would encourage you, let's stand together. through you.