

Keynote: Sorrow and Joy

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[0 : 00] Good evening. Evening wonderful to have you here. My name is Aaron. If you're new, I particularly and especially welcome you here this evening. Jordan and I look after the service.

We are in the middle of a series in the Gospel of John. The story of Jesus is told by John. And we're in what's called the Upper Room Discourse or the Farewell Discourse. So the first 13 chapters of John just go like a freight train. It's action, action, action, action, action, right?

And then you have like these five chapters, which really it's like the whole narrative slows right down. Everything slows down. So instead of action, action, action, you have like 13 to 17. So that's five chapters of just like 24 hours in Jesus' life.

So he's, he's, it's Jesus with his disciples in the Upper Room, which is just the upstairs of somebody's house. And he's making these kind of keynote speeches or these short sermons on particular things. And what he's doing is he's preparing them for what's about to happen.

And he says in verse 33, tribulation is a guarantee. Like, like carnage is a guarantee moving forward. There is trouble folks coming down the pipeline. You need to be ready for it.

[1 : 22] He's the defection Judas. That's coming. He's kind of alluded to that. And then Jesus spells out quite specifically, he says, you know, you guys are going to be all excommunicated, right?

You're going to be kicked out of the synagogues. That's the center of their cultural life. He says, you guys will be excluded from the center of, of life in your communities. And, and that's the best case scenario.

Worst case is you'll be killed. You'll die. And if you actually look at the passage, you'll notice it doesn't say, Jesus doesn't say there is a tiny, tiny chance that you'll die. Like just actually figured I even said it.

Jesus doesn't say that. He says, look, he says, whoever kills you, like it's going to happen. And the people that kill you because it's going to happen, they think they're doing God a favor by doing it. Like it's, it's bonkers. And then, and then, uh, and we know the disciples were all martyred apart from John who died in exile.

Jesus goes on our alluding to the cross. Now he says, there's something else coming up and, um, it's going to make you really, really depressed. Really, really sad. He says, and just using some words from our passage, he says, you guys are going to wait. You'll lament. You'll be anguished. You'll be sorrowful.

[2 : 50] Sorrowful because again, using passages from the text, I am going, you'll see me no longer. I am leaving. So then disciples go out into the world. You face certain depression and death. And by the way, I'm, I'm not going to be with you.

I won't physically be with you. I mean, from the outside, it's just, it's a ridiculous scenario. And it gets worse when you consider the content of the gospel message that he has charged his disciples to preach.

The message the disciples are charged to preach is this. The uncreated God became a penniless preacher and was crucified naked as a criminal on a cross.

And unless you believe in him, you're all unclean. That's the message. So God sends out a bunch of illiterate fishermen with no rank or place in society with that message, sends them out from some backwater town in a country with no political clout internationally and says, now go and turn the world upside down.

And they do. They do. It happens. And historians have had great trouble accounting for it ever since. But Jesus accounts for it here.

[4 : 19] He tells it how it happens. And this is how it happens. God didn't just send out men and women. He sent out his Holy Spirit with them. But before the Spirit comes, Jesus lays out to his disciples the emotional rollercoaster they're about to endure, they're about to experience before that happens.

Because right in the middle of the chapter, you know, Christ has been repeatedly said, as we said, repeatedly been saying, I'm not going to be around. I'm going back to the Father. And the way that's going to happen is going to be terrible.

Like really terrible. He doesn't explicitly mention the cross. He said it's going to be terrible. And what makes it even worse is that when I die, most people are going to celebrate it. So, disciples, there is great sadness coming.

There is great sadness coming. But that sadness will turn into joy and will turn into rejoicing. And to explain sort of how and why this sort of transition takes place, he uses the picture of childbirth there in verse 20 and 21.

Let me remind you of what it says. It says, you'll 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.

[5 : 38] I was at the birth. I have three children. And five, three, and one. And I was at the birth of all my kids. I was in the delivery room. And the prenatal classes we went to, which is like learning how babies come out stuff, were, that's actually the tagline.

Yeah. Our one was taught by the sort of aging hippie woman. And she, if you're an aging hippie, I apologize.

But don't get into prenatal work, please. And she gave us this ridiculously, like, unrealistic view of the experience.

So I'm going into this kind of childbirth thing, situation, thinking this is going to be great. Amy will, this is going to be a bit of pain, you know. It's all right. Amy will be lying there. I'll be holding her hands. And we'll be staring into each other's eyes.

And I'll be reading, you know, selected poems. To her, maybe some readings. Anna Green Gables, perhaps.

[6 : 46] Well, that didn't happen. I do remember Amy screaming at me. Why are you breathing on me? There was a point when I was breathing in the room.

And when you're in that much pain, like I said, I guess that's a problem. Childbirth is really rough. It is a messy, messy, screamy, bloody, cussy kind of experience, to be honest.

Like, it's really, it's really full on. And I'm just the husband. I'm the observer. I'm watching my wife go through this horrendous pain. And I can't do anything to help her. It's horrible. Obviously, a million times worse for her.

But, but the baby comes. The baby comes. And with all my kids, I wept and wept and wept and sobbed for joy when the babies came. It was just an incredible experience.

And so this is the picture that Christ uses. This is what it's going to be like. You will go through, you will have deep, deep trauma. But on the other side, unimaginable joy.

[7 : 57] Verse 22, he summarizes it. So also you have sorrow now, but I'll see you again. And your hearts will rejoice.

And how is this for a promise? And no one will take your joy from you. What does that mean? I mean, he's alluding to the resurrection. But how can Jesus say your joy can't be taken?

Because eventually he will go. Right in the ascension, he is going to take off and be with the Father. Yeah. And normally when somebody goes like that and dies and takes off, it's not.

It's not super fun for the people left behind. I mean, every other death in the world, what are we left with? We're left with great memories. Maybe not always good memories, but memories.

Or some memorials. Like their reading glasses or like, you know, handwritten recipes or something like that. So lovely things. Jesus didn't just leave that, those things, you know, like his sandals or whatever.

[8 : 56] Like, Jesus went to the Father. But he leaves the ongoing eternal presence of the Holy Spirit with his believers.

Now the disciples, they just can't get past this idea that Jesus is going. We see that in verses 17 and 18. They're like, what are you saying? What? A little while?

What are you talking about? How long is a little while? When is this little while happening? And they say, we don't know what you're talking about. Why are you saying these things? I mean, we can understand, I think, why they're hung up on it.

The general is leaving the night before the battle. But Christ really wants to get across. He really wants to get across this idea that it's really great if I go.

It's best if I go. Because in verse 7, it says, I tell you the truth. And that means he's about to say something important. I tell you the truth.

[9 : 54] It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I'll send him to you. How can Jesus say this?

I mean, he says, it's far better that you see me no more, see less of me. How can whatever is coming be better than the presence of the physical, like historical Jesus?

How can that be better? Well, Jesus answers that in a few verses. And perhaps you've got that in your mind as well. Is the presence of the Holy Spirit really an improvement on the presence of Jesus?

Well, Jesus says so. Let me speak to that idea sort of in general terms. And then we'll go specifics into how Christ answers that question.

But in general terms, Jesus lived 2,000 years ago. Jesus had a local ministry. It was like a local ministry. He was tied to the flesh that had taken on.

[11 : 01] Which means he could only be in one place at one time in space and time, right? And so for everyone who lived after he died, if there was no Holy Spirit, what have we got?

The best experience we can have of Jesus is sort of second hand. That would be the very best experience, right? Then it would be third hand, fourth hand, fifth hand, sixth hand. Without the Spirit, Jesus would be the memory that would slowly slip further and further into the past.

But the Holy Spirit comes. He leaves his Holy Spirit. So that universalizes his presence through eternity with us.

So we can experience the life of Jesus in us now. And as we said a couple of weeks ago, that's the life of God in you. You can't get closer than in.

We can enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with Jesus. Now that's some general thoughts here.

[12 : 04] Specifically, what does Jesus say here? Well, he talks about the work of the Holy Spirit and how wonderful it is. And he talks about two things. He talks about the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

And he talks about the discipling work of the Holy Spirit. I want to spend a bit of time on the convicting work and a shorter amount of time on the discipling work. So first, the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

Here's why the Holy Spirit is going to be awesome, Jesus says. Verses 8 to 11. So three categories.

Sin, righteousness, judgment. Let's talk about them individually. First, sin. The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin. Now the word convicts the world.

This is legal jargon. It's legal jargon from back in the days. You know like a courtroom situation where there's a prosecuting lawyer and they kind of cross-examine somebody? That's what it's talking about.

[13 : 18] It's cross-examining somebody so that they would see their error. So it's not to prove to a judge or a lawyer that the person is wrong.

It's helping the person themselves see the holes in their own story. Now at this point, if you're kind of new to faith or not a Christian at all, you might think, goodness, this is negative.

Like this is the first thing the Holy Spirit does. It's negative, isn't it? But it's what you do if you love somebody, isn't it? If you love someone and they get involved in something a bit silly or a bit stupid, don't you get tough with them?

Don't you want them to see what they're doing wrong? It's like in the movies when you've got like a monster and like two people are running away from the monster.

And one person falls over like on a branch or something. The other person comes back and talks to the person that's fallen down.

[14 : 22] And the monster's coming. The monster's coming. And this is a very simplistic example, but you know, okay. The person that goes to the person that's fallen down. I should give them names, shouldn't I?

But I can't be bothered. The person that's... I'm getting myself confused. There's a person lying on the ground and a person standing over them. This person here doesn't sort of say to the person lying on the ground, I just want to encourage you.

I just want to walk with you, beside you. You've got some great qualities. Remember the time you hosted that family that was new to the city? You've got beautiful eyes.

I could swim forever in those eyes. No, they don't like just be like real nice and gentle with them. They yell at them. They go, come on.

Get your backside off the ground. You're going to die. You're going to die if you stay down there. Get up and let's keep going. The thing is going to eat you, you know.

[15 : 23] Right. I shouldn't have used that example. I'll just say the sentence.

That's what I should have done. You get tough on people when you love them. You're tough on people that you love. The Holy Spirit gets tough with people. The Holy Spirit convicts people. The Holy Spirit prosecutes people so that they have a proper assessment of themselves.

And as a result of that assessment, realize their need for Jesus. You know, try getting somebody to go to the doctor that doesn't feel sick.

The Holy Spirit says to people, you're not well. You need a doctor. I remember hearing the testimony of this guy who had lived this very, very debauched life.

Like, like, uh, really awful life. And his testimony was radical.

[16 : 28] He just said, you know, the Holy Spirit came upon him one day. Became a Christian. Like a kind of a radical conversion. He says his first response, he started vomiting. He tells his testimony.

And he says, he says, now don't over-spiritualize that vomiting. I wasn't like exercising. It wasn't like demons were coming out of my mouth or something. He says, I just, I just saw my life for the first time through the, through the eyes of the Spirit.

And I was disgusted. And I felt nauseous. And I vomited. The lawyer for the prosecution, the Holy Spirit, he helped this man see what his life really looked like.

Now, again, I just want to touch on this again. You might be thinking, goodness, this is so negative. Like, what about, what about a bit more positivity in the work of the Holy Spirit?

What about my self-esteem? What about that? Doesn't God care about that? Isn't that important? Of course it's important. But this is not a self-esteem thing. And the Holy Spirit, look, the Holy Spirit says to you, you're a sinner.

[17 : 36] You need God. That's not bad self-esteem. Bad self-esteem says to you, you're a sinner. You can't go to God. There's a big difference there.

Okay, we need to move on there. The Holy Spirit convicts people of their sin and their need for a Savior. Next, the Holy Spirit will convict people concerning righteousness.

That's verse 10. What does that mean? Well, I think it's talking about two things. It's talking about our perceived righteousness and God's real righteousness.

And I say our perceived righteousness because we can think that we're pretty great at times.

Like, I can think I'm pretty great. I recycle. I... Help that lady across the street lift that heavy object with my upper body. You know? That was unnecessary.

[18 : 43] I can feel pretty good about myself sometimes. Like, I'm pretty awesome. I'm a pretty good guy. See, the Holy Spirit's job is to kind of sort that attitude out.

Because that's going to get you nowhere. That's not going to help you come to Jesus. John Calvin... John Calvin... He's really good on this.

On this verse here. So I'm just going to leave it to him. I'm just going to read. It's like that three sentences. It's kind of oldy English. So just bear with me. I'll read it slowly. He says this.

So long as we do not look beyond the earth, we're quite pleased with our own righteousness, wisdom, and virtue. We address ourselves in the most flattering terms and seem only less than demigods.

But should we once begin to raise our thoughts to God and reflect what kind of being he is and how absolute the perfection of that righteousness and wisdom and virtue to which as a standard we are bound to be conformed.

[19 : 43] What formerly delighted us by its false show of righteousness will become polluted with the greatest iniquity. What strangely imposed upon us under the name of wisdom will disgust us with its extreme folly.

And what presented the appearance of virtuous energy will be condemned as the most miserable impotence. The Holy Spirit's job, he will show you your righteousness.

How it really looks. And he will show you the beauty of God. And the only way to get from here to here is through Jesus.

That's what the Holy Spirit will do. So sin, righteousness, and lastly judgment. Verse 11. Concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judge.

What does that mean? The Holy Spirit. He wants our hearts to know. And you notice I keep saying he because it's a masculine personal pronoun. The Holy Spirit is not an it. The Holy Spirit is a person.

[20 : 50] The Bible gives them a masculine personal pronoun. So that's the one we all use. He wants our hearts to know that despite all appearances.

Through the cross. Through the resurrection of Jesus. Evil has been defeated. And what does that mean? I said this. I think I said this last week or the week before. I'll say it. I'll say it again. Satan's only weapon that can ultimately hurt people is unforgiven sin.

And on the cross Jesus disarmed him. Jesus took that weapon away from him. Because Jesus took the punishment for your sin on himself. So you can enjoy good standing with God.

The kind of standing that Jesus has with God. That's the standing that you have now. You have God's stamp of approval. Because of what Jesus did. The devil has nothing on you.

Has nothing on you. The ruler of this world has been judged. Sin. Righteousness. Judgment. This is just great stuff, isn't it?

[21 : 55] How do we summarize this? Let me say it in one sentence. What does the Holy Spirit do? He applies the good news of Jesus to our hearts. That's what the Holy Spirit does.

These are the convicting ministries of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, the discipling ministries of the Holy Spirit. We'll just do this in one minute. Verse 13.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority. But whatever he hears, he will speak.

And he will declare to you the things that are to come. And then there's this wonderful sort of climactic statement describing the work of the Spirit. He will glorify me. That's what Jesus says. The Holy Spirit will glorify me.

For he will take what is mine and declare it to you. The Spirit's been described as the shy. The shy member of the Trinity. Because the Spirit doesn't point to itself.

[22 : 52] The Spirit has a floodlight ministry that illuminates Jesus. What I mean is that it's, you know, like a floodlight that shines on a beautiful building.

If you've been to Rome or something, floodlights on a beautiful building. And if it's done really well, you don't see the floodlight. You're just enamored by the building. That's the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

That's what J.R. Packer talks about. It's a wonderful description of it. So the Spirit's job is to show us Christ. When we see Christ, well, it changes everything.

We could say it like this. The Holy Spirit has a ministry. And it's a Christ-centered ministry. Now, I'm going to attempt to tie this all up and finish.

And the disciples are about to have their world just completely upended by what looks like disaster and tragedy.

[23 : 52] Betrayal. The death of their Lord. People are going to want to kill him. And they're going to scatter. They're going to scatter like terrified little mice.

So Jesus here, he's preparing them. And he's teaching them things that they will probably just understand and retrospect. But he's teaching them. And the message is this. That the Father is going to send the Spirit, the very life of God, in you.

And them, and us, and me, you. And that Spirit will show you the brilliance and the beauty of Jesus. And there is nothing better that you can know. And the Holy Spirit will do that through conviction and through teaching.

Application of this? Goodness. There's a million applications here. Can I just give you just two short ones? The first one is this. Perhaps you've had this experience of trying to explain the gospel to somebody.

Or trying to explain why you've made a particular stand against something or for something. Or what you do on Sundays and why you bother going to church. And maybe those attempts have been not great.

[25 : 11] I just want to encourage you. If God wants somebody in his kingdom, the Holy Spirit will work in their heart through your best efforts.

No matter how good they are. When I first became a Christian, it was through these guys. And I think back to what they said to me. Some of it was just, it was pretty bad.

Like, it wasn't great. Like, I remember my first Bible study I went to. Not a Christian. And the guy opened his Bible and he said, So, the Bible has dragons in it. Dragons.

He started talking about Leviathans and stuff. And I didn't know anything. But I was pretty sure there was more important things to talk about. But I stuck around. I became a Christian.

That was the best they could pull together. You know, that was the best they could do. But the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart. Folks, you can go out there and you can speak to people like Jesus with a wonderfully humble confidence knowing that you do your job.

[26 : 15] You do the best job you can. But the Holy Spirit, He will do His job. Second thing I just want to say in application is this joy.

I wonder if you know this joy. This impenetrable joy. This joy that no one can take away from you. And that doesn't mean a life of just this sort of giddy plastic smile.

It doesn't mean that you will never experience sadness or trauma or depression or anxiety. But underneath all this, there is a deposit in your heart.

The life of God in your heart. And it says to you that the things that you hope in, the things that you believe in, the things that you trust in, are eternal things.

And all these other things that can bring us down, rightfully so, can rightfully make us really sad, are a temporary thing. Underneath it all is the life of God, God's Holy Spirit that says your hope is an eternal thing.

[27 : 22] And there is nothing anyone can say that can break that hope, that can take that away from you. Amen.