

Learning from Jesus' Last Message #14 "The God Who Changes Sadness into Joy"

Message Notes, May 8, 2022

John 16:16-24

¹⁶ "In a little while you won't see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again." ¹⁷ Some of the disciples asked each other, "What does he mean when he says, 'In a little while you won't see me, but then you will see me,' and 'I am going to the Father'?" ¹⁸ And what does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand."

¹⁹ Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, "Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won't see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. ²⁰ I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. ²¹ It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. ²² So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. ²³ At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. ²⁴ You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

◆ Jesus' Concluding Remarks to His Disciples

- What was the main point Jesus wanted to communicate to his disciples at the end of his final message?
- In the original Greek, "truly, truly" appears twice, and indicates the importance of the message Jesus was leaving for his disciples.

◆ The Significant Events that Occur between the Two Uses of "A Little While" (v. 16)

- Jesus says that after a little while, the disciples will not see him, and then after a little while, they will see him again.
- The disciples argued with each other, not understanding what Jesus meant.
- The first interval is the time until Jesus was crucified, and the second interval is the time from then until His resurrection and reappearance to the disciples.
- In the time between those two events, the disciples experienced "weeping and mourning" (v. 20) and "anguish" (v. 21).

◆ What Kind of Weeping and Mourning?

- The words translated weeping and mourning are the same ones used to describe Mary Magdalene's sad and exhausted state at the tomb on Easter morning: a mental state of utter despair and hopelessness.
- When were the disciples in such a state of mind?
 - It becomes clearly visible at the arrest of Jesus, but their hearts had already begun to waver.

John 16:32 But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.

- The disciples' mourning and grief was not just simple bereavement at the loss of their mentor. It was also a time when the disciples were reminded of their own weakness. What was inside them—their true selves—was exposed, and their misery and pettiness so overwhelmed them that they could not even look up, let alone see Jesus.
 - ◇ Have you ever been so overwhelmed by your own misery that you cannot even look to God?

Ref: **Luke 18:13-14** ¹³ "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' ¹⁴ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee,

returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

◆ What Jesus did for His Disciples

- “I will see you again” (v. 22): He reassured his sad disciples “You will see me again in a little while,” but in reality, Jesus came to his disciples so that they could see him.
- His purpose in appearing to them was not to take revenge on the disciples who had betrayed him, but to forgive them and to give them peace. In doing so, the deep sorrow in the hearts of the deeply contrite disciples was transformed into great joy, as they received peace from him.
- The Lord Jesus was crucified and killed, tasting the most miserable death in the world. This “death” is the very power that rules over sorrow, as well as hatred and darkness. When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, “darkness fell across the whole land” (Mark 15:33). At that time, the powers of darkness reigned, sorrow filled the hearts of men and hatred covered them. But the Lord Jesus did not die and decay, but “after a little while” He defeated death and rose again to “life.”
- The risen Lord did not appear to the disciples in this way because they were eager for it. Rather, he appeared to them even though they did not expect it at all, because of the immeasurably great love of Jesus, who understood the depth of their sorrow and wished to turn it into great joy.

◆ What Jesus does for Us

- The risen Lord appeared not only to the first disciples, but He who lives forever does the same for each of us, even now. Just as the disciples were forgiven for all the condemnation in their hearts and “greatly rejoiced when they saw Him” (John 20:20), we too can rejoice greatly when we see the risen Lord!
- When we meet the Lord, all of our sorrows turn to joy, for the resurrected Lord surrounds us with the light of His love, which triumphs over the world and illuminates our hearts.
- “No one can rob you of that joy” (v. 22). On the contrary, the Lord has given us a wonderful prayer promise to make that joy full to overflowing.
John 16:23b-24 I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. ²⁴You haven’t done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.
- Here, “in my name” means “in the presence of the risen Lord Jesus, “ in other words, “with the realization that the risen Lord is with us.” As the name represents the body, so the “name of Jesus” represents “the body of Jesus.” Therefore, every time I pray with conviction in the presence of Jesus who has risen for me, I am given complete forgiveness of sins and live in the light of his warm love. I experience anew each day that sorrow not only turns to joy, but also that His joy is overflowing.

◆ Conclusion

- Have you ever come face to face with your true nature and been brought to despair? What did the Lord do for you in that moment?
- What darkness are you currently carrying around with you? How will the Lord shine his light there? Do you believe and entrust yourself to him?
- As the Lord comes to you now, what is He saying to you that will turn your sorrow into joy?