

“Joy Comes in the Morning”

John 16:16-24

INTRO:

There is a verse from the Psalms that has served as a comfort to many a believer. **Psalm 30:5** *“For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.”* Although in its context this verse is talking about the blessing of coming out from under the Lord's chastening, many see in it a reminder that sorrow is not forever. When the darkness of sorrow passes there is the dawning of a new and joyous day. You are probably singing in your head that song that summarizes this thought. *“Hold on my child/ joy comes in the morning/ weeping only lasts for the night/ Hold on my child/ joy comes in the morning/ The darkest night means dawn is just in sight.”*

This very truth is the one that Jesus is communicating to His disciples at this very dark moment in their lives. The Cross looms large over all that the Lord has been saying in this upper room discourse and every moment that passes it gets closer and closer. So, in preparing His disciples for this momentous event, the Lord Jesus speaks about what is ahead. His communication falls into two parts.

I. The Cross Looms Ahead (v. 16-19)

II. Joy Comes After Suffering (v. 20-24)

I. The Cross Looms Ahead (v. 16-19)

A. In **v.16**, Jesus made a statement, which will be repeated twice more in these four verses. *“A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.” Then some of His disciples said among themselves, ‘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 go to the Father?’ They said therefore, ‘What is this that He says, ‘A little while?’ We do not know what He is saying.’ Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, ‘Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me?’”*

B. The disciples are not the only ones confused by these verses. The commentators also debate what our Lord was saying. Some think that Jesus is looking beyond the cross, burial and resurrection to His ascension to the right hand of the Father and His second coming to planet earth. This could fit, and it would explain His reference about going to the Father. However, if we remember where the disciples are at this point and the fact that they do not know what is ahead, it makes more sense to think that Jesus is talking about the cross.

1. Only *“a little while”* from right then, He would be taken from them, tried in a kangaroo court, formerly rejected by the nation, and finally nailed to a cross to die in our place.

2. The second ***“little while”*** spoke of the three days that he would spend in the tomb and then he would rise from the dead. We find the fulfillment of this promise in **John 20:19-20**.

“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”

3. This going away and seeing them again is vitally important to the point that John is making in His Gospel. Remember when he wrote in **John 20:31?**

“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

We cannot believe that Jesus is the Son of God unless we understand that He died and why He died and that He rose again. This is the essence of the Gospel message.

D. We can also apply this in another way to us who are far distant in time from the disciples in the upper room. The Lord Jesus went away from us for ***“a little while.”***

1. He ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, where He is seated making intercession for us. Yet, some day He is coming back again for us. We read the promise given at His ascension in **Acts 1:9-11**;

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’”

2. The Lord’s return is described to us in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**;

“I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

And in view of eternity, this is just a little while. Meanwhile, we need to live our lives in view of that coming. The Apostle Paul wrote in **Titus 2:11-13**;

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously,

and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,”

II. Joy Comes After Suffering (v. 20-24)

A. In v. 19, we are told that the Lord knew that His disciples were asking among themselves what the Lord Jesus meant by this cryptic statement, and that they wanted to ask Him. So, He said to them (v.20) ***“[Verily, verily,] I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.”*** He doesn't directly answer their questions; instead He tells them that both grief and joy will come.

1. ***“You will weep and lament.”*** These are strong emotions of great personal loss. The disciples will hurt and grieve because their Lord, their comforter, will be taken and crucified. **Mark 16:10-11** give a glimpse into what it was like for the disciples; ***“Mary Magdalene went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.”***

2. What will make the Twelve's sorrow worse is that while they grieve, the world will rejoice. They will believe that they have “once and for all” gotten rid of that trouble making Jesus.

B. When night was darkest, dawn would come. The disciples' grief would not be long lived, and the morning would change everything. To help them understand this Jesus uses a picture to show us a wonderful truth in **(John 16: 21-22)** When a woman gives birth is she excited? No. The event of birth brings her great sorrow. Labor is not easy. But then the baby arrives and what happens to the tears and exhaustion of labor? Gone in a nanosecond. There is joy because her child has been born into the world.

1. Here is the point that Jesus is making. The very event that brought on the deep sorrow will also bring the abundant joy. You now have grief, but when you see me again the very event that brought you grief will bring you incredible joy. This joy no one will ever take away from you.

2. Did that happen? **(John 20:20)**
“When [Jesus] had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”

They were exhilarated at the sight of Him. I am sure that they could not contain the joy. And then what happened when He ascended to heaven? Did they lose this joy?
“Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.”
(Luke 24:51-53)

C. Now granted we are not living in the time of the disciples when Jesus was going to the cross. We can apply this in the sense that Jesus has gone away from us now. We live in a world in which the folks who hate the Lord are rejoicing. They seem to be triumphing on every side. We are under unprecedented attack. Cheer up my child joy comes in the morning. Our suffering will be turned to our joy when He returns. (1 Corinthians 15:58)
“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

As the song says:

Hold on my child, Joy comes in the morning
Weeping only lasts for the night
Hold on my child, Joy comes in the morning
The darkest night means dawn is just in sight!