

Subject: Sorrow Turned into Joy

Scripture: John 16:16-33

Sorrow and happiness are both a part of life, and both depend to a large degree on our circumstances. When we trust in Christ He gives us a joy that no problem or situation can take away. That's why the Bible says to count it all joy when we face various trials and that's why it says to rejoice in the Lord always.

CHRIST'S PROMISE OF JOY (vs. 16-22)

First, Jesus gave some bad news and then He gave the good news. The bad news was that He was going to die and leave the disciples for a time. The good news was that they would see Him again after the resurrection.

He spoke of "a little while" (vs. 16-19) and they didn't understand what He meant. This wasn't the first time Jesus spoke of "a little while" (Jn. 7:33; 14:19). Then he gave them a promise that their sorrow would turn into joy. Notice that sorrow would not only be followed by joy, but sorrow would be transformed into joy. In other words they would not feel the lingering effects of sorrow, but it would turn into joy from that point on.

He gave them an illustration we can all understand. The anguish of a mother in labor is replaced by joy when the baby is born. It's as if she forgets the labor when she sees the baby. How else can you explain that a mother will give birth to ten or more children? The Bible gives three examples of sorrow turned into joy: 1) Joseph; 2) Job; and 3) Jesus. And we can add a fourth example: Jesus' disciples and that includes us.

CHRIST'S ASSURANCE ABOUT PRAYER (vs. 23-27)

The disciples were accustomed to asking Jesus for things. When they had a need they looked to Him and asked Him for help. He would not be with them like He had always been, so now they would ask the Father in His name.

To ask in Jesus' name is not just ending a prayer with those words. To ask in His name means to connect your requests with His will and purpose, to ask what pleases and honors Him, to ask for what He approves. It means to pray in a way that He will say "Amen." This was not the first time Jesus told His disciples to pray in His name: **John 14:13-14**¹³ *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*¹⁴ *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

CHRIST'S WARNING ABOUT FAITH (vs. 28-32)

In verse 28 we have one of the greatest summary statements about Jesus Christ: *I came forth from the Father* (His heavenly origin and His deity); *I am come into the world* (His birth and earthly ministry); *I leave the world and go to the Father* (His death, resurrection, and ascension).

The disciples confessed their faith in Christ. The thing that convinced them to believe in Him was that He knew all things (vs. 30). The omniscience of Christ was what convinced Nathanael to believe, **John 1:47-49**⁴⁷ *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*⁴⁸ *Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast*

under the fig tree, I saw thee. ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. The omniscience of Christ was what convinced the Samaritan woman to believe, **John 4:29** *Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?*

These eleven disciples were true believers, but Jesus knew their faith was far from perfect (vs. 31-32). He knew it was just a short time until they would all be afraid, run for their lives, and leave Him alone.

CHRIST'S PROVISION OF PEACE (vs. 33)

Jesus said it would not be easy for His disciples in this world. In the world they would have tribulation, but in Him they would have peace. The word tribulation means pressure, stress. That would be depressing if we didn't have the Lord's help. Believers can be of good cheer (have joy), because we have a peace that the world can't take away. The world can't take His peace away and our circumstances can't take His peace. **John 14:27** *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

The peace of God is not the subtraction of problems, but the addition of His grace to deal with our problems. Scientists who study the ocean tell us that even when a storm is raging on the surface, the deep water is calm as can be.

Philippians 4:6-9 ⁶ *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* ⁷ *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* ⁸ *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* ⁹ *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.* In this Scripture peace is described as a guard watching over us and keeping us safe. It is a blessing to have the peace of God with you, but it is an even greater blessing to have the God of peace. Scripture always connects the peace of God with our thoughts of Him.

Isaiah 26:3 *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

Our peace in Christ is connected to our victory in Christ. We have a powerful picture how this works when Jesus walked on the water to the disciples who were in a terrible storm. The high waves were crashing onto the boat and the fierce winds had them rocking and reeling, but Jesus walked on top of those waves and in the midst of that wind. Everything that threatened to be over their heads was under His feet. Sometimes the Lord calms the storm and sometimes He calms His people in the storm.

One day when we get to Heaven we will have full joy and perfect peace, but until then the joy and peace of Heaven can come to us.