

# The Necessity and Source of Joy

**John 16:16-24**

March 23, 2014

*Pastor Paul Anthes*

**John 16:16-24** <sup>16</sup> "A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." <sup>17</sup> *Some* of His disciples then said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling 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'?" <sup>18</sup> So they were saying, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'?" We do not know what He is talking about." <sup>19</sup> Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'?" <sup>20</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. <sup>21</sup> "Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup> "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one *will* take your joy away from you. <sup>23</sup> "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. <sup>24</sup> "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

**Introduction:** When Jesus said these things it was just hours before his death. Most of us can figure out what He was saying based on what we now know happened. His disciples did not have that knowledge. We know that Jesus is speaking of His Crucifixion and subsequent resurrection three days later. So...is this a truth only for them? Not at all. In this chapter His death, burial and resurrection are clearly in view, but Jesus has also spoken of His coming to take believers to heaven with him.

**John 14:3** <sup>3</sup> "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

**John 14:28** "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father....

The realities of His ascension, absence and coming again have many of the same elements. He leaves, is gone, but is coming again.

**"A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." [16]:** They have heard Jesus predict His death now two times in just a few minutes yet they still did not grasp it.

**His disciples then said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling 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 '?" [17]:** They decided to try to figure it out on their own rather than reveal their ignorance to the Lord. We of course would never do anything like that. The longer we are with Christ the less likely it is for us to admit that we just don't understand things He says. This is probably the single biggest obstacle to knowing God. It is still true that the only stupid question is the one which is never asked.

**So they were saying, "What is this that He says, 'A little while '?. We do not know what He is talking about." [18]:** The disciples were familiar with death. The fact that a man would die was not the puzzle. It is the part about "a little while" that is the focal point of their confusion.

**'A little while':** This is a word you might recognize. "Micron" In English it means one millionth of a meter, but it has a colloquial use. "very small or miniature." In a very short time [hours actually] Christ would be murdered. They are still not grasping that Christ's death is planned and precisely intended to coincide with, and fulfill the passover. And they do not understand anything at all about His resurrection. Here is the account three days later, when they finally understood that amazing truth.

**John 20:6-9** <sup>6</sup> And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying *there*, <sup>7</sup> and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> **For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.**

Jesus finally leaves all the metaphors and illustrations behind and tells them this....

**John 16:28-29** <sup>28</sup> "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father." <sup>29</sup> His disciples said, "Lo, now You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech.

Their understanding, even then, was partial and would not yet stand the test of time and trials. They are going to need the help of the Holy Spirit just like you and I do, to understand the things freely given to us by God.

For now they are confused and just unable to piece things together. Bible commentator Fredrick Godet put it this way.

"Where for us all is clear, for them all was mysterious, If Jesus wishes to found the Messianic kingdom, why go away? If He does not wish it, why return?" *Godet*

**Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'?" [19]:** It always amazes me that my pride or fear of exposing my ignorance will keep me from knowing and understanding God more fully. Jesus however, reads us like an open book. Why not pray [ask the Spirit for understanding] and seek for answers in the book that the same Holy Spirit wrote to teach

you? I have had things that bewildered me for years, but when my desire to know and love Christ more overcame my pride, God The Spirit led me quickly and joyfully to the answers. The only reason to remain confused about God is your unwillingness to ask Him and seek His response. While God Himself can never be fully known by us, His revelation can be largely understood. There is a mountain of things that He has freely revealed to us in Scripture. Speaking of the Scripture....Moses explained it this way...

**Deuteronomy 29:29** <sup>29</sup> "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

**"Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; [20a]:** Here Jesus begins to explain what He means by His declaration. He does not hide the hard truth from them. What is about to happen is going to cause them weeping and grieving. This is the truth that the church wishes to hide from men today. AND...this is because it is more interested in getting people to follow them than to love Christ. Jesus never equivocates on this point.

**John 16:33** I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

The disciples, weak as they were, did love Christ. Jesus Himself acknowledges this fact...

**John 16:27** <sup>27</sup> for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

Jesus does not hide from them the consequences of loving Him instead of the world, but He immediately tells them the outcome. They are going to lose the companionship and comfort of Jesus through death. And this is worse than just a natural death. He would be brutally and unjustly accused of being a demonic, a blasphemer, a criminal and then murdered on the basis of false witnesses by means of an illegal trial and execution. It is grievous even now to contemplate. Jesus said...

**You will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. [20b]:** While the world is yucking it up that they are finally rid of God's Son, Christ the Lord and Creator, He will suddenly rise from the dead. This is a complete reversal of fortunes. God sent a harbinger of it on the day of Christ's murder.

**Matthew 27:50-53** <sup>50</sup> And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. <sup>51</sup> And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup> The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

The message here...."Kill me and you are killing death and opening the grave." My death brings life to men and breaks the power of death. In the wee hours of this next Sunday...just three days away now....Jesus will reverse everything. They will not

reverse anything. Their grief ‘WILL BE TURNED INTO JOY!’ It is the doing of Christ. Everything here is the doing of Christ. He was in complete charge of all these events having planned them with the Father before the world was created.

**Acts 2:23-24** <sup>23</sup> this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. <sup>24</sup> "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Oh the irony of Satan’s murderous plot!! By killing the Son, Satan sealed His own eternal damnation.

**Hebrews 2:14-15** <sup>14</sup> Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

**"Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. [21]:** Jesus illustrates. Child birth is painful and exhausting. That is why it is called “LABOR!” But what mother is thinking about that when her child smiles at her the first time or takes its first step? What mother is overcome with grief and misery when her child graduates from High School or College or is married. Grief and pain are fleeting. Joy is enduring, even eternal, in the case of Christ.

I was recently asked this question....”Where is the Joy of Christ in the Scripture.” Jesus was a “man of sorrows and acquainted with suffering.” He was homeless and mistreated and poor and misunderstood. He was persecuted for doing good and being good. Where is the joy? Jesus Himself answers this question.....

**"Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. [22]:** The pain and grief was because “in a little while” they would no longer see and be with and enjoy...HIM! This world is a mess. The world did not suddenly get better for the disciples. It does not suddenly get better for us when we come to Christ. The world is not fit to give you lasting joy. It is not intended to satisfy the longings of your inner man for meaning and purpose. It betrays you again and again with bait and switch...until you become a cynic or a bitter old person waiting to die. I want something better for you. I want Joy that springs from your heart and radiates warmth and light in a spiritually cold dark world where “no one will take your joy away from you.”

Webster says that joy is: “a feeling of great happiness, a source or cause of great happiness, something or someone that gives you great happiness, success in doing, finding or getting something.

If you are thinking....yes but there are many things in this life that can give joy, I would agree. Even Christ and the Apostles agree, but everyone of them is temporary and subject to change, corruption and failure. That perfect job or company can and usually

does morph into something else....sometimes even a grief. That beautiful healthy partner will get old and sick....guaranteed. The car you always wanted wears out or gets totaled. The phone is obsolete before you can learn to use it. This is the immutable reality of this world. Failure to observe this is at the heart of our misunderstandings of the Joy of Christ.

**Mark 8:35-37** <sup>35</sup> "For whoever wishes to save his life [for Himself] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup> "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Coming to Christ does not change the world. Your life and circumstances do not suddenly change and the laws of the universe that we just described are not suspended because we believe in Christ. The Joy is Christ! Being a believer does not cause the world to give you lasting joy. This world gives temporary joy and not even that much of that most of the time. There is nothing wrong with temporary joy except that it cannot satisfy the longing in our spirit for something eternal. This is a lost truth in our day, but 300 years ago it was known.

“God himself is the great good to which [the redeemed] are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good and the sum of all that good which God purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion [destiny] of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their life, their dwelling place, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honor and glory.” *Jonathan Edwards*

The greatest desire of all men is to be happy. Everything we do, purchase or desire is in some way connected to our desire to be happy. And this is not limited to physical items. The person we marry. The music we listen to. The friends we have. The church we attend, even the things we believe are things that make us happy. No one truly believes things he does not like or embrace....and he likes and embraces thoughts and conclusions that please him. In this world....everything that brings us happiness will change or be lost. This does not mean that we take no pleasure in them when they change, it just means that this world cannot give lasting joy because everything in it is subject to change...usually for the worse!

So the disciples were devoted to Christ. They had come to depend on Him for their understanding, protection, provision and comfort. Now He will die and grief will take over. The world will be joyful, because what they want is to be rid of God, but the disciples will grieve until....Christ is suddenly alive and with them. The unbelieving world cannot be joyful with Christ in it and those that love Christ cannot be joyful with Him absent. **The Joy of Christ is Christ Himself!**

The answer to my friend's question "where is the Joy of Christ?"....is "Christ Himself is that source and cause" of great happiness that Webster describes. He is that someone that gives you great happiness. He is the thing you obtain that makes you happy. Jesus spent His entire ministry trying to impress this on men. This world is not the treasure that

brings us eternal life and joy. God is that treasure and Christ is the revealer and Son of God. Jesus bridged the gap between us by being both God and Man. His love for you is unspeakable. He spread it across the pages of creation.... at the Cross.

**Romans 5:6-8** <sup>6</sup> For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

**"In that day you will not question Me about anything. [23a]:** You will not be asking me questions after the resurrection. The disciples are always asking Christ to explain something or else they are asking themselves what He means. But their relationship to Christ was Rabbi [teacher] to disciples [learners]. That will end after the resurrection. The Holy Spirit will do that ministry. The Spirit Himself even produces in us love, joy and peace God offers us. Love for Christ! Joy in Christ! Peace from Christ!

**Galatians 5:22** <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,

**Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. [23b]:** Until this time they have looked to Christ for everything. Now Jesus is telling them and you, that because of Him you have access to ask the Father. God who is the source of everything in creation is now willing to hear and respond to your prayers.

If you had millions in the bank and had great financial needs, wouldn't you fill out a withdrawal slip and receive what you required? Of course you would. Jesus has taken away the guilt and punishment for your sins and has replaced them with the joy of being washed clean as if you had never sinned. He has given you His perfectly righteous standing. Along with that goes free access to the Father, because you are in Christ. This is the doing of God. Not your righteousness! Not even your faith! It is the doing of God that you are in Christ and therefore able to come to Him for any and all things. This is something to be excited about....Dare I say it....TO be JOYFUL about.

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31** <sup>30</sup> But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

**"Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full. [24]:** Until now they have not prayed this way. Jesus is telling them that they have free access to God that men have never had before now. It was always restricted. They went through Moses and then Aaron and then the Levites.

BUT THIS....This changes everything! This is a platinum pass into the throne room of the living God and it has the picture and name of Jesus....His perfect holy Son on it. It cannot be counterfeited. If you have it, you got it from Christ as a gift and the Father knows that and accepts you without question when you come to Him.

**Hebrews 4:14-16** <sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. <sup>16</sup> Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**CONCLUSION:** Perhaps you have lived long enough now to know the feeling of grief that comes when what you wanted so badly left you high and dry. The person you trusted betrayed you. The material item you worked for did not actually make you happy for very long. The things you swore would never happen to you...DID! This is the fallen world we inhabit. When you are young Satan entices you to believe it will make you happy...GIVE YOU JOY! When you are older Satan embitters you against you life and circumstances and family. He says...they all let you down. Nothing turned out the way it was supposed to. I did my best and this how God pays me back.

**Answer this Questions:** Until you get this straight in your mind, you are prey for Satan. He plays you like a marionette and laughs as he does it. Looking to this world for lasting Joy is like trusting the Federal Government for your financial future and to tell you the truth. It is not going to happen.

**Ask for a verdict:** Let me say a final word about Joy. You have probably been taught somewhere that it is wrong to want to be happy and joyful. This is another one of Satan's endless spins. His explanation goes like this. God does not want you to enjoy your life! He keeps things from you that would make you happy. The world will give them to you and I am the god of this world. You can trust me. You can listen to me...you WILL NOT SURELY DIE!

Now this is the truth. God is the source of all Joy. Even the temporal ones that only satisfy for a moment. The Spring rain...from God. Marriage and sexual love...God's idea not mans. Food and Drink and rest and peace...all God's doing. But all temporary in this world. All disappointing to our souls because they yearn for permanence and eternal satisfaction. Don't waste your life pursuing something that you will absolutely loose in the end.

You should enjoy your life now. Enjoy your work. They come from God and they were all His gift to you...BUT do not love the gift and ignore or even spurn the giver. God is interested in your eternal joy...you tend to be interested in your temporary joy.

**Ecclesiastes 2:24-25** <sup>24</sup> There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God. <sup>25</sup> For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?

You should therefore...seek Christ. He is Joy and happiness. You do not know Him well enough. You are looking in the wrong place for Joy.

Let me leave you with some final verses:

GOD REJOICES OVER HIS CHILDREN....THAT WOULD BE YOU!

**Zephaniah 3:17** <sup>17</sup> "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy. He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

GOD EXHIBITS HIS JOY DAILY IN HEAVEN

**Luke 15:10** <sup>10</sup> "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

JESUS CAME BRINGING THIS JOY OF GOD TO YOU ON EARTH

**John 17:13** <sup>13</sup> "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

LOVING CHRIST IS THE MEANS TO ETERNAL JOY

**John 15:11** <sup>11</sup> "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

GOD'S ULTIMATE REWARD FOR YOU IS JOY

**Matthew 25:21** <sup>21</sup> "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'