

JOHN 16:16-28
FROM SORROW TO JOY!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 16 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

Over the last several weeks we have been covering a period of time from the Passover that Jesus celebrated with His men all the way to the cross. Now we have not gotten that far yet, but that is where this is all heading and that is what Jesus is telling His men. That He is going away and where He is going they cannot come, at least not yet!

These hours before He would be arrested, tried and crucified we see Jesus instructing His men in the things that they needed to carry on the work after He was gone. And He did not want them to be troubled over this because, even though He was going away, He would send the Comforter or the Holy Spirit to them who will teach them, instruct them, empower them to carry on the work!

Imagine being with someone, a leader, for 3½ years and you pour your life into him and then he tells you that he is going away, and they are going to be on their own. That would be devastating.

But Jesus was not going to leave them alone, as I have said. The Holy Spirit would take up the work that Jesus was doing and not just with a few men, but with all those who come to faith in Christ. And we see the results of what started way back then today!

And it was not just that Jesus was going to be put to death. Many of these things Jesus was sharing with them were going to be difficult for them. We saw how Jesus spoke of loving people, laying down one's life for people, and they probably felt good about that. ***“Sure, we can love people, that is not that difficult.”***

And after Jesus spoke of loving people, He tells them that the ones that they are to love are the ones who will hate them, persecute them! Okay, that is a little more difficult because the flesh does not want to love those who hate us, use us, persecute us. We want to retaliate or get back at them. And yet, Jesus says that we are to love them as He loved those who have persecuted Him!

That kind of love is not a human type of love, but it is a supernatural love, an ***AGAPE*** love or unconditional love. It is not a love that is based on what others have done to us, but a love that is based in what God has done for us and He wants us to love others that way!

Over the last few weeks, here in John chapter 16, we have been looking at the work of the Holy Spirit in the world drawing people to Jesus.

We saw that the Holy Spirit is convicting the world of sin and that sin that He is speaking of is rejecting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. You see, apart from Christ you are dead in your trespasses and sins. You are standing upon your own righteousness before God and your righteousness is like filthy rags. It will not be accepted, you need Jesus.

The Holy Spirit will convict the world of righteousness because Jesus is going back to God the Father. That means that the only righteousness that God the Father will accept is the righteousness of Christ or perfection!

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

In other words, Jesus took our sins and paid for them on the cross of Calvary and when we receive Him into our lives, He gives to us His righteousness!

And lastly, the Holy Spirit is judging this world just as Satan will be judged. There is no escape from this judgment except through Jesus!

That is what the Holy Spirit is doing in the world.

And we then looked at the Holy Spirit working in our own lives after we are saved.

And Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit will guide us in all truth. That He will tell us what we need to know, things to come as He has spoken through the writers of the New Testament as He did through the writers of the Old Testament. And His work is to bring glory to Jesus, not to exalt self, but Jesus! And when He speaks, He does not change or alter what Jesus has said, but He will declare it to us, take us deeper through the Scriptures.

This morning here in John chapter 16 we are going to look at this topic – ***FROM SORROW TO JOY!***

Let me share this with you to give you a perspective of the sorrow that these disciples of Jesus had. We are told,

Few if any of us can fully appreciate the misery the disciples experienced in their last night with Jesus, when they saw their Master framed against the rising sun, pathetically agonizing through his last hours, apparently helpless and impotent.

The disciples had been up all night, and they had no nourishment since the Last supper.

Then came a dizzying whirl of events – the exit from the upper room, the descent from the dark walls of Jerusalem, the ascent of the slopes of Olivet, the vigil at Gethsemane, with the Master repeatedly casting himself down in prayer, Peter’s denial and curses.

And soon after that would come the growling, ravenous mob and the butchery of our Lord at Golgotha.

That was a misery that cannot be fully described.

- R. Kent Hughes, John – That You May Believe, p. 383

I think it is important that we understand what these men were going through. It was overwhelming to them. As I have said, they gave 3½ years of their life to Jesus and they are expecting the Kingdom Age to come, to have positions of honor in the Kingdom Age, and now this!

Now Jesus is telling them that He is going away, that He will be put to death, and it brought them great sorrow, as you can imagine!

How could this happen to them?

Why did this happen to them?

We truly don’t like the storms of life that come our way, but they are truly needed in our lives for us to grow and these were going to be some powerful lessons in their lives.

But what we will see here is that sorrow would turn to joy but without that sorrow, the joy would not be as rich and important.

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean about the devastating effects of not having storms in our lives.

We are told,

In northern Chile, between the Andes Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, lies a narrow strip of land where the sun shines every day! Clouds gather so seldom over the valley that one can say, “It almost never rains here!”

Morning after morning the sun rises brilliantly over the tall mountains to the east. Each noon it shines brightly overhead, and every evening it brings a picturesque sunset.

Although storms are often seen rising high in the mountains, and heavy fog banks hand their gray curtains far over the sea, Old Sol continues to shed his warming rays upon this “favored” and protected strip of territory.

One might imagine this area to be an earthly paradise, but is far from that!

It is a sterile and desolate wilderness! There are no streams of water, and nothing grows there.

We often long for total sunshine and continuous joy in life, and we desire to avoid the heartaches that bring tears to our eyes.

Like that sunny, unfertile part of Chile, however, life without clouds and even an occasional downpour would not be productive or challenging.

But though showers do come, they will also end, and the sun will shine again. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” (Psalm 30:5).

- Our Daily Bread

Let’s face it, none of us want trouble or difficulty in our lives but it is where we grow in faith. And that is what we will be looking at this morning – ***FROM SORROW TO JOY!***

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

PREDICTION AND CONFUSION – JOHN 16:16-18

FROM SORROW TO JOY – JOHN 16:19-22

ANSWERED PRAYER – JOHN 16:23-24

HIS ANNOUNCEMENT – JOHN 16:25-28

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 16, beginning in verse 16 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic – ***FROM SORROW TO JOY!***

JOHN 16

VERSES 16-18

Why does Jesus keep telling them that He was going away, that He was going to die?

He is trying to prepare them for what is ahead, and they truly did not get it. They did not understand that Jesus was going to be arrested in just a few hours and then He would be crucified!

Trench put it like this, ***“During the interval between His death and resurrection the disciples lost their faith and spiritual vision, and no more beheld Him than did the world.”***

But He was not just going away, but He is coming again when He rose from the dead!

Now let me take a minute here because there are a few different ways we can look at this idea of **“a little while.”**

The first one, when Jesus said, “**A little while, and you will not see Me . . .**” is easy. It is speaking of His soon arrest and crucifixion. One commentator put it like this, “*This speaks of how He was soon going to be arrested, and they would be scattered like sheep and separated from Him. He’d be crucified and buried. He would be absent a little while and they wouldn’t see Him. . . .*”

I think we all can see that without much of a problem.

It is the second one that is seen in a few different ways. Jesus said, “**. . . and again a little while, and you will see Me . . .**”

What does this mean?

The first view is that after He was crucified and placed in the tomb He would be gone for a little while, for three days and then He would rise from the dead and all would see Him again. That just makes sense because we see that spoken of in the Scriptures.

In Mark 16:14-20 we are told, “**Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.**”

I think that just makes sense, that this is what Jesus is speaking of.

Another view is that it is speaking of His Second Coming and the reason they feel this way is because Jesus uses the illustration of a woman in labor in John 16:21 and we see that same idea in Matthew 24:4-8 as Jesus spoke these words in the Olivet Discourse. It is possible, but I am not completely sold on that interpretation.

Others say it is speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. But I don't really think that is the point.

As I have said, I truly think the point that Jesus was making is that they would soon see Him again, after His death and resurrection, just as the Scriptures tell us.

And I think Jesus speaks of this in John 16:20 and John 16:22 as He is answering their question and He told His men, **“Most assuredly, 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. . . . Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”**

I think that is pretty clear in regard to what He was speaking of when He told them He was going away, speaking of His death, and they would see Him again, speaking of His resurrection!

They would be sorrowful when Jesus was crucified, put to death. It will be difficult for them, but when He is raised from the dead, they will see Him again and that sorrow that they had will be turned to joy, tremendous joy for them. And we will look at that point in a few minutes, that for these men, they will go – ***FROM SORROW TO JOY!***

So Jesus is spending all this time with His men, teaching them, sharing these things with them and we see their response, ***“What in the world is He talking about? I don’t get it. We are not going to see Him and then we will see Him, what is that all about?”***

And please understand that these men got together and talked amongst themselves about all of these things that Jesus said, and they just could not get it. That is why I have called these verses – ***PREDICTION AND CONFUSION!***

You see, they just could not accept the fact that He was going to die. They just did not get it, not yet!

Remember, they are still thinking Kingdom Age and, in their minds, like Godet put it, ***“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?”***

For us, we wonder why they did not get it. But understand we are looking back at the completed work; they were looking ahead to the completed work!

We have the Holy Spirit opening up to us the things of God, they did not! At least not yet!

Think about it. He was going away, to die. They would not see Him. He was going to rise on the third day, which they did not get. And then they will see Him again!

But, like I have said, they too will understand these things as the Holy Spirit will open their eyes to the truth after the death and resurrection of Jesus!

Confusion is around today, and I don’t think I even have to tell you that. But for Christians, should we be so confused by all that is happening in this nation and in this world?

I don't think we should be. You see, Satan is the author of confusion, and the Lord is the One who brings peace, understanding and comfort. If you are confused, then bring it before the Lord and let Him guide you because confusion is a bad state to be in.

Let me show you what I mean.

Harry Truman enjoyed telling about the man who was hit on the head at work.

The blow was so severe he was knocked unconscious for an extended period of time.

His family, convinced he was dead, called the funeral home and asked the local undertaker to pick him up at the hospital, which he did.

Early the following morning this dear man suddenly awoke and sat straight up in the casket.

Confused, he blinked several times and looked around, trying to put the whole thing together. He thought, *"If I'm alive, what in the world am I doing in this soft, satin-filled box? And if I'm dead, why do I have to go to the bathroom?"*

- Harry Truman.

Those are good questions. But again, for us as Christians, the Lord has given to us His **PREDICTIONS** for what is happening and going to happen and thus, we should not be **CONFUSED!**

How easy it is to worry and become anxious and confused when evil seems to prosper and triumph over good.

Yet these are the very things that I am told not to fret over.

Why?

Because God is in control.

David wrote in Psalm 37:1-9, **“Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret - it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the Lord, They shall inherit the earth.”**

Evil is not going to win. I am not saying things are not going to get worse than they are, they will. But evil is not going to win. Thus,

TRUST IN THE LORD!

DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD!

COMMIT YOUR WAYS TO THE LORD!

WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIM!

DO NOT FRET!

EVILDOERS SHALL BE CUT OFF!

THOSE WHO WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH!

Oh Lord, give us the strength to trust in You, to commit our way to You, and to enjoy that rest and peace that is found in You alone.

As we move on, we need to remember that these men were troubled by all of this, they were filled with sorrow over what the Lord was telling them. But as we will see happen to them, they will go – ***FROM SORROW TO JOY!***

VERSES 19-22

Here we see that Jesus knew what they were discussing. They were not sure what He meant and that they wanted and needed more clarity regarding the words He spoke to them.

Dods points that out for us as he wrote, ***“Jesus, perceiving their embarrassment, and that they wished to interrogate Him, said to them: ‘Are you inquiring among yourselves?’”***

And so, the big question here is this. ***What is Jesus speaking of here?***

We have talked a little about this, but I think it is very clear that Jesus is speaking of His death and how His death will bring them great sorrow. And yet, the world will rejoice over the death of Jesus!

I find that interesting that the world will rejoice over the death of Jesus! I think we see that same attitude today as many just want to put to death everything about Jesus!

I saw this Facebook post that had someone carrying a sign that basically said, ***“If Jesus were around today, I would kill Him!”***

Man has not changed. The unsaved love the darkness and they try to extinguish the light just as they did in Jesus’ day. But since Jesus is not physically here, they attack Christians and everything we believe!

I know, not too encouraging but keep in mind that this was not too encouraging to His men at that time. But just as they would see the Lord once again, we too will see the Lord when He comes back for His Bride, the Church. We will see Him!

And look at what Jesus says to His men who were troubled, who were sorrowful here in John 16:20, **“but your sorrow will be turned into joy.”**

Did you hear that?

I hope so because I want you to listen carefully to what Jesus said and what He didn't say here because it will play out as we look at the illustration that He will give about a woman in labor.

Jesus does not say that He will take away or replace their sorrow with joy, but their sorrow will be turned into joy.

When did that happen?

When Jesus rose from the dead! He is speaking of the resurrection!

Spurgeon picks up on this and he wrote, *“It is most remarkable and instructive that the apostles do not appear in their sermons or epistles to have spoken of the death of our Lord with any kind of regret. The gospels mention their distress during the actual occurrence of the crucifixion, but after the resurrection, and especially after Pentecost, we hear of no such grief.”*

In other words, the sorrow of the death of Jesus is directly connected to the coming joy of His resurrection.

Now we will see this principle illustrated for them and for us by Jesus. You see, as we read on, we will see that Jesus is going to use the picture of a woman who is giving birth and how that sorrow of having a child, the labor, would be directly connected to the coming joy that her child has been born into this world.

Listen again to what Jesus said to them in John 16:21, **“A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.”**

This picture fits what Jesus was just speaking of perfectly!

What do we see here?

What we see here is that Jesus is speaking a woman who goes into labor and the end result of that labor is that she brings forth a child.

I can't imagine what a woman goes through giving birth to a child. But I have witnessed what my wife went through, not just once but twice!

The intense pain. Incredible pain.

Some say that the closest thing to the pain in childbirth is passing a kidney stone. I don't know, I have not experienced either of them, but when I just think about what happens in childbirth, I give this one to the women! Wow!

I don't think I need to go further except to get to the point. Think about it. When my wife went into labor with our first born, it was excruciating, and it was a very long process. In fact, at one point she grabbed me, never stand close to your wife in labor when they are in pain, and she said, ***“Let's go home. I am done with this. I don't want to go on any further!”***

Well, that was not going to happen, and it was only going to get worse for her.

But do you know what happened?

She gave birth to our son Joe and all that pain that she had with the labor, with the birth process was forgotten because of the birth of Joe!

How do I know that is true?

Because we had a second son, Tony. And if she truly remembered all that she went through the first time, I don't think this would have happened a second time!

Now let's see the point that Jesus is making with this illustration.

His point is this. The pain of His death upon His men was going to be like that. It will be very difficult, and yet, that will all be forgotten in the light of His resurrection. That is what was born out of His death!

Now, here is an interesting question.

Why would their joy remain?

Because it was not based upon outward circumstances but upon the Lord and thus, no one can take that joy from them or us.

And look at their lives; they are a testimony of that joy as they endured death with joy in their hearts, willing to die for their faith in Jesus.

In fact, we don't see them talking about the sorrow, but the joy of the resurrection and, like I have said, that joy could never be taken away from them or us!

One writer put it like this, ***“Our Lord's meaning appears to have been this: that his resurrection should be so completely demonstrated to them, that they should never have a doubt concerning it; and consequently that their joy should be great and permanent.”*** (Clarke)

And we can sum this up like this. ***God brings joy to our lives, not by substitution, but by transformation.***

And it is in this illustration of a woman giving birth that makes this very clear. It is like this - ***The same baby that caused the pain also caused the joy.***

One pastor put it like this. He wrote,

Every parent knows what it is like to have an unhappy child because a toy is broken, or a playmate has gone home.

The parent can do one of two things: substitute something else for the broken toy or absent friend - or transform the situation into a new experience for the unhappy child.

If Mother always gets a new toy for the child each time a toy is broken, that child will grow up expecting every problem to be solved by *substitution*.

If Mother always phones another playmate and invites him or her over - the child will grow up expecting people to come to his rescue whenever there is a crisis.

The result either way is a spoiled child who will not be able to cope with reality.

The way of *substitution* for solving problems is the way of immaturity.

The way of *transformation* is the way of faith and maturity.

We cannot mature emotionally or spiritually if somebody is always replacing our “broken toys.”

Jesus did not say that the mother’s sorrow (pain) was *replaced* by joy - but that the sorrow was *transformed* into joy - the same baby that caused the pain also caused the joy!

And so it is in the Christian life: God takes seemingly impossible situations, adds the miracle of His grace, and transforms trial into triumph and sorrow into joy – “. . . **but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you.**”

(Deut.23:5)

Joseph’s brothers sold him as a slave, and Potiphar put him into prison as a criminal; but God transformed that hopeless situation of defeat into victory.

What Joseph's brothers intended for evil God used for good - the same situation that brought such sorrow into Joseph's life was the very thing God used to bring great joy.

King Saul's murderous pursuit of David only made him more a man of God and helped produce the psalms that encourage our hearts today.

Even Jesus took the cross, a symbol of defeat and shame, and transformed it into a symbol of victory and glory.

The Lord knows what tomorrow is going to bring. That's why He says, ***"As difficult as this might seem, it's absolutely necessary that I put you through the pain of today to prepare and perfect you for the work of tomorrow!"***

- Source Unknown

How true that is. Another great example of this joy is seen in the death of Stephen for his faith in Acts 7:54-60. Stephen just got done sharing his faith in Jesus with these religious leaders and they responded as follows, **"When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep."**

Also notice what John tells us in I John 1:1-4, **“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life - the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us - that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”**

Our joy should be full, it should be overflowing because our joy is based in Jesus, and no one can take Him away from us!

Let me sum this up with this true story because it truly illustrates what Jesus is saying here in John.

We are told,

One Monday some years ago a banner was displayed over the door of the Wheaton College (Illinois) Alumni Office – ***“Welcome Sarah Linnea”*** – in celebration of the arrival of a baby girl, born to Ed and Marsha Meyer.

When Marsha was three months pregnant, she fractured her spine and consequently spent six and a half weeks in a Stryker frame and nine weeks in a body cast.

That was an extremely difficult time for Marsha because of her discomfort and her concern for her family and the unborn baby.

You can imagine some of the thoughts that ran through her mind.

A great amount of prayer from her church and college family rose on her behalf.

But after the baby was born, they said, ***“The joy of our new baby girl makes it all worth it. The memory of the past misery is a small thing in comparison to our great joy.”***

Their sorrow was transformed to joy, and that is precisely what happened to the disciples on Resurrection Day!

We experienced that when we came to know Christ as well. Our mourning over our sins was turned into joy of new life.

For the true believer the sorrows of life are pregnant with potential joy.

We see this in the lives of great Biblical heroes.

Moses' forty years of discouragement was followed by forty years of powerful ministry (notwithstanding the well-known vicissitudes [variations, changes] of that ministry).

Abraham's despair over Sarah's barrenness ultimately ended in joyous song.

Our present difficulties too bear the potential of joy.

True, some of us will never know complete joy until we are with the Lord, but even in life on earth, our sorrows bear the potential of a transformed and deeper joy.

In broken families, in times of illness, in spite of financial reversals or outright persecution, our difficulties can bring us new joys.

- R. Kent Hughes, John – That You May Believe, p. 385

Exactly! Remember what we are told in 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.”**

Here we see the contrast between the momentary nature of God's anger and the lasting grace that He extends to us.

We may go through those nights of darkness in our walk with the Lord, but His grace, His love is always there to lift us up, to bring about that joy in our lives.

It is as Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations 3:22-24, **“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I hope in Him!’”**

Praise God for that!

And as we relate this to Christ, the weeping in the night and the joy in the morning, *“This is a most beautiful and affecting image of the sufferings and exaltation of Christ . . . of the night of death, and the morning of the resurrection.”* (Horne)

So what we see here in John is Jesus encouraging His men that they will be sorrowful but that sorrow will be transformed into joy as Jesus is raised from the dead! And no one can take that joy away from us as Jesus said because no one can take Jesus from us!

As we continue on here, we are going to look at – ***ANSWERED PRAYER!***

VERSES 23-24

What does Jesus mean when He says, **“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. . . .”**?

John 16:23.

It may be speaking of the day of Christ’s resurrection and when they see Him, they will be speechless. They will be so overcome with joy that they won’t know what to say.

As true as that is, I think it is speaking of something else here.

I think the point that Jesus is making is that He is going away, He will be taken back up into heaven, into glory and they will not be able to make their requests directly to Him any longer.

Then what will they do?

They will go to God the Father and ask Him!

But how can they have access to God the Father or for that matter, how can we have access to God the Father?

It is as Clarke wrote, *“Ye have not as yet considered me the great Mediator between God and man; but this is one of the truths which shall be more fully revealed to you by the Holy Spirit.”*

Did you see that?

Our access to God the Father is through Jesus and now that we are His we can approach the Father and freely speak to Him.

You see, we can't approach the Father in our own righteousness, which are like filthy rags, but as we have the righteousness of Christ imputed into our lives by faith, we can approach Him! What a glorious promise that is to us!

And please understand that God is not obliged to answer our prayers because we put the tag, *“In the name of Jesus”* on it! Not at all.

Then what does Jesus mean when He says that we are to **“. . . ask the Father in My name [and] He will give you.”**?

This is not some magic formula that causes God to respond. Asking in the name of Jesus means you are asking as Jesus would ask and thus, you are abiding in Him, you are obeying Him, and your requests are not going to be worldly but spiritual.

I am not saying we can't pray for a job or this or that, we can.

But we have made prayer into something that it is not, a get what you ask for mentality. The reality is that prayer is getting what God wants in our life!

Dr. James Boice put it like this, *“Much of modern prayer, even by serious Christian people, is useless and ineffective because the people involved approach God thinking that he is obliged to grant their requests because of something they have themselves done for him.”*

(James Montgomery Boice, The Gospel of John, Vol. IV, p.314)

Let me say this. Praying in the name of Jesus means we are coming on the basis of His merit and not ours! May we not forget that.

John makes that point in I John 5:14-15 as he wrote, **“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”**

That truly is the key. When we pray, we are to pray according to His will because God knows exactly what we need and what we don't need. I don't!

One author puts it like this for us. He wrote,

God wants to use us as His instruments on the earth to show His power through by being a witness to bring others to Christ.

This is all tied in with prayer - Christ centered prayer. Prayer for the glory of God from the heart of a disciple whose heart breaks to see a world lost and on its way to destruction - a world taking glory away from God.

That kind of prayer will be answered - the kind that brings glory to God not to self with carnal selfish prayers.

So many people have gotten caught up in this teaching - God help us to understand what it means to truly follow Jesus Who was (and is) so selfless and others centered.

And please understand that Jesus or the Bible is not saying we can't pray for ourselves, we need to be praying for ourselves as well as others. The key is that our prayers are always asking for God's will to be done and not ours, as I have said.

Let me put it like this.

Oswald Chambers interprets praying in Christ's name as asking anything "*in my nature.*"

This simply means that we are to ask for what Christ would want, not just our own spontaneous desires.

Prayer is not a means by which we get God to do what we want. Rather, it is a means by which God does through us what he wants.

Chambers says, "*The idea of prayer is not in order to get answers from God: prayer is perfect and complete oneness with God.*"

This happens when we are filled with the Holy Spirit and our hearts are so in tune with the Lord's that we pray for those things he desires for us.

- R. Kent Hughes, John – That You May Believe, p. 387

Paul tells us this in Romans 8:26-27 as he wrote, "**Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**"

As we read on, we are going to see – *HIS ANNOUNCEMENT!*

VERSES 25-28

The Greek word translated “**figurative language**” is a word that means to speak symbolically using parables, allegories, or other figures of speech.

Remember that Jesus just spoke of a woman in labor and the pain that she would have but when she delivers that child all that is forgotten for the joy of the birth of her child!

Now, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Jesus will speak to us plainly and He does in accordance with His Word.

Let me share these words with you from Warren Wiersbe regarding these verses. He wrote,

In John 16:25-27, Jesus explained that there would be a new situation because of His resurrection and ascension, and because of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

He would no longer speak to them in terms that demanded spiritual insight for their understanding. He would speak to them plainly and reveal the Father to them.

There in the Upper Room, He had used a number of symbolic images to get His message across: the washing of their feet, the “Father’s house,” the vine and branches, and the birth of a baby.

In the days that followed, these images would become clearer to the disciples as they would be taught by the Spirit of God.

The purpose of Bible study is not simply to understand profound truths, but to get to know the Father better. “I will show you plainly of the Father” (John 16:25).

If our reading and Bible study falls short of this, it does more harm than good.

There would be not only a new situation in teaching, but also a new situation in their praying. He had already intimated this in John 16:23.

Jesus would return to heaven to be with the Father, and there He would minister as our High Priest making intercession for us (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

He would also minister as our Advocate (1 John 2:1). As our High Priest, Jesus gives us grace to keep us from sinning. As our Advocate, He restores us when we confess our sins.

His ministry in heaven makes possible our ministry of witness on earth, through the power of the Spirit.

When you read the Book of Acts, you discover that the early church depended on prayer. They believed the promises of God and asked God for what they needed.

It would do all of God's people good if they reviewed regularly what Jesus taught about prayer in this Upper Room Discourse.

There is indeed joy in praying and in receiving answers to prayer.

There is joy in meeting the conditions Jesus has laid down for successful praying.

I think it was George Muller who said that true prayer was not overcoming God's reluctance, but overcoming God's willingness.

There is joy in prayer, and there is joy in realizing the principle of transformation.

- Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT*, p. 292

Also, I want you to see that you don't have to ask Jesus to ask the Father, but you can speak directly to the Father because of the work that Jesus has done for us.

Now this is interesting because some believe that we need to go through Mary to intercede for us, others say the dead saints, but Jesus tells us we can now go directly to the Father ourselves!

And keep in mind that we were never to go through dead saints or anyone else. Jesus is the Mediator between God and man, **PERIOD!**

Morris puts it like this, *“The reason that Christ will not intercede for them is now given. There will be no need. The Father Himself loves them. He does not need to be persuaded to be gracious. In this case the ground of acceptance is the relationship in which they stand to Jesus.”* Exactly.

Now listen again to the wonderful news that Jesus is telling His men and us.

Jesus said, **“for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.”** John 16:27.

Also, in I John 4:19 we read, **“We love Him because He first loved us.”**

In fact, God loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins so that we can fellowship with Him once again.

Think of it like this, *“A pulse doesn’t make the heart pump, but it is evidence of it. Our love for God doesn’t make Him love us, but it is evidence that He loves us.”* (David Guzik)

I like that and it fits perfectly!

And Jesus then says in John 16:28, **“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”**

His work on earth would shortly be over and He would return to the glory He had before the incarnation.

Here we see – **HIS ANNOUNCEMENT!**

Now you may be thinking that He has told His men this already. In fact, He has told them this several times that He is going away.

Why does He keep repeating Himself?

Because they just did not get it or want to get it. I think this was too much for them and they tried to block it out as much as they could.

As I close this morning, I want you to remember, no matter what you are going through, no matter what pain you are enduring, no matter how difficult things may be for you right now, that sorrow will be turned to joy. And that is accomplished by looking to Jesus and He takes our pain, our hurt and replaces it with His joy!

And I will leave you with these words from Psalm 30:11-12, **“You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.”**