

John 16.16-33—Jesus has Conquered the World

- I. Introduction
 - a. Have you ever watched that game when the team thought they had the game won before the time ran out? I know I have.
- II. Main Point
 - a. The veiled words of Jesus claim that he has conquered the world. We know what he means but the disciples will weep and lament when Jesus wins because it will appear that the world and death will have won the day.
- III. Outline
 - a. The disciples will be sorrowful but their sorrow will be turned to joy
 - b. The disciples can take courage in a world full of trouble because Christ has conquered the world and in him, they may have peace
- IV. Exposition
 - a. Let's look at what Jesus says will cause his disciples sorrow and how that sorrow will be turned to joy.
 - i. Verses 16 through 19 say a lot about "a little while" and seeing and not seeing. We just need to figure out what Jesus is talking about because you may be as confused as his disciples are.
 - ii. It begins with Jesus' statement, "A little while (the word we get our English word micro), and you will see me no longer, and again a little while, and you will see me."
 - iii. Instead of explaining this verse, let's first see how the disciples respond to the statement.
 1. It's been quit some time sense we have heard the disciples say anything. The silence of Peter is stunning.
 2. However, only some of his disciples speak and they are not asking Jesus but discussing it with one another.
 - a. What is this he says to us? And repeats the statement.
 - b. Obviously, they do not understand. They do not understand the best teacher and communicator there's ever been.
 - i. This encourages me in at least two ways, I often do not understand either and even the best preacher is misunderstood.
 - c. My guess is, what Jesus said doesn't make sense to some of you either and you could affirm verse (Jn. 16:18) "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about."
 - i. It's often hard to know precisely how the disciples misunderstand but here the issue seems clearly to be a time issue—a little while.
 - ii. I'm pretty sure they have some idea that he is about to die. If that's the case, it doesn't make sense that he will die which means they will not see him but then in a little while they will see him. That doesn't seem possible.
 1. I'm sure most of them had lost family members in death and they haven't seen them since then.
 2. Unless he means at the funeral.
 3. Jesus knew that they were wanting to ask him about this, so he again repeats his statement.
 - a. But what happens? He doesn't explain it. He knows they will soon understand and he intends to say enough to prepare them for his departure but keeps some of it hidden.

- b. I paused here and just thought about what Jesus did. General understanding is often better than knowing the details. There are numerous things in life for which I could say...if I had known this...but I'm glad I didn't.
 - i. I recall going to football practice one day and the coach was angry about something so the entire team did 100 up/downs.
 - ii. I never skipped practice. Never. But I would have that day if I had known that was coming. That was nearly 30 years ago and I haven't forgotten that day. If the coach would have asked any of us if we could do 100 up/downs I think most of us would have said, "I don't want to find out."
 - iii. We all suffered through it together. For those who might not know what an up/down is, you chop your feet until the coach blows the whistle. Then you fall on your chest and pop back up as quickly as possible.
 - iv. We had to do this as team. Everyone had to do every up/down. That means, if someone was slow about getting up you had to keep chopping your feet and urge them to get up.
- c. I can tell you; we were all dead tired and hurting by the end. A brief water break and back to practice.
- iv. Jesus intentionally doesn't explain what the disciples do not understand. He does, however, tell them how they and the world will respond to what's about to happen.
 - 1. He marks this off as extremely important: (Jn. 16:20) ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice.
 - a. When Jesus goes away (by death?) they will weep and lament but the world will rejoice.
 - i. This word used for weeping always accompanies death.
 - ii. 2 Samuel 1 is a helpful place to see this happen. King Saul and his son Jonathan died in battle against the Philistines.
 - iii. David writes a lament in verses 17-27 while the Philistines had already rejoiced back in (1 Sam. 31:9) They cut off his head and stripped off his weapons, and sent *them* throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people.
 - iv. David's lament ends like this: (2 Sam. 1:25-27) ²⁵ "How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. ²⁶ "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful Than the love of women. ²⁷ "How have the mighty fallen, And the weapons of war perished!"
 - v. I suppose a eulogy is as close to a lament as we get these days.
 - 2. What will cause them to weep and lament? What will cause the world to rejoice?
 - a. It is none other than the death of Jesus Christ. And that is what Jesus means when he said, "A little while, and you not see me."
 - i. At this point, he is only a few hours from being nailed to the cross.
 - b. But what about, "and again a little while, and you will see me" and the latter part of verse (Jn. 16:20) You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.
 - i. This is none other than the resurrection. Jesus' death will cause them to weep and lament but his resurrection will turn their sorrow into joy!
 - ii. There's nothing like the hope of the resurrection to turn sorrow into joy. Certainly, that's why Paul wrote these words in (1 Thess. 4:14-18) because Jesus' death and resurrection insures our resurrection: ¹⁴ For

since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

- v. It hit me as I was thinking though these texts. Embedded in all these truths is the clear message not to give up. And really, why do they not get up and leave when Jesus says these things?
 - 1. It is certain that fears and sorrows will come. If not, the Bible wastes a lot of time reminding us not to fear and to rejoice.
 - 2. The life of a Christian moves up and down on the scale of sorrow and joy. We get depleted and must be filled up again and again.
 - 3. Though we are made in God's image, we are not like God in every way. The old Puritans talked about God's aseity which means "from Himself" (Grudem 160). God is dependent on no one or anything. He is self-existent.
 - a. He doesn't need us to be happy. He is completely happy in himself and he never changes. But you might ask, isn't God angry at sinful humanity so much so to send a flood? The answer is yes. But what is different about God is that his happiness is never changed by his holy anger against sin.
 - b. That's not true of us. We change. As we mature as Christians, it does become more stable I suppose but we all need to be reminded to start over and to be joyful in the Lord.
- vi. It's like the illustration Jesus gives about the woman in labor. She no longer remembers the anguish on account of the joy that her child has been born!
 - 1. Jesus then applies this illustration to the disciples in verse (Jn. 16:22) ²² So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.
 - a. The repeated phrase earlier had been "you will see me" but here Jesus changes it to "I will see you again." They could have seen him after his death in the tomb and the "you will see" could have meant that. But when Jesus says I will see you that changes everything.
 - b. True joy is only found in the presence of Jesus. When he was taken away, they weep and lament. And to have that presence, we need God's forgiveness. And that's the mission of Jesus, to pay the debt we owe and cannot pay so that we can be with him forever!
 - c. The reason your joy cannot be taken from you is because Jesus cannot be taken from you.
- vii. But experientially, our joy is more or less full (not taken) at times. Most certainly, the purpose of prayer is for that very reason: ^{NAU} **John 16:24** "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.
 - 1. Indeed, the disciples' sorrow will be turned to joy.
- b. This last section wraps up chapter 16. What Jesus has to say here is to help them understand that they are simultaneously in Christ and in the world. In Christ they may have peace and, in the world, they will have tribulation. This calls for courage.

- i. Jesus explains that he has been speaking to them in “veiled language.” We’ve talked about this already but again he has been revealing and concealing. He is on a mission to go to the cross. His plans will not be thwarted...not even by his disciples.
 1. So, all that he’s been saying before the cross and resurrection and the coming the Holy Spirit, has been veiled.
 2. But, after the resurrection, he will speak plainly and freely. He will unveil the Father more clearly.
 3. Then they will pray to the Father in his name, which they have had no need of thus far. (Jn. 16:26-27) ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf;
 - a. Access to the Father in prayer must come through Christ or there is no access at all.
 - b. There are numerous places and people in the world that you have no access to but we can come boldly to God.
 - i. The writer of Hebrews brings up an obvious hinderance to prayer. He anticipates that believers will think that God could never be of any help to them because he doesn’t understand what it’s like to be a weak human being like us.
 - ii. (Heb. 4:15-16) ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
 - c. But sometimes I think we still think of God the Father as the angry One who sent floods and plagues throughout the OT and Jesus is the kind and compassionate One.
 - i. But Jesus says, they are to ask the Father in his name. Why? First, because Jesus will no longer be physically with them and also Verse 27 says because the Father himself loves (phileo) you, because you have loved (phileo) me and have believed that I came from God.
 - ii. If you love and believe in Christ, you can say with John who wrote this Gospel: God loves me!
 - iii. It’s hard to pray to someone in whom you suspect doesn’t love you. Please hear what Jesus says about those who love and believe in him, God loves you! Settle that in your heart, today.
- ii. Jesus makes this statement which isn’t new: (Jn. 16:28) I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."
 1. We have come to expect the disciples to respond this way in verses 29 and 30, claiming to have suddenly figured it out and everything is now clear. And they certainly say more than they actually know.
 2. Jesus’ patience is amazing. Be encouraged by how Jesus persistently loves them even when they respond like this.
 3. Jesus’ reply can be taken as a question or a statement: (Jn. 16:31) "Do you now believe? But he had just said that they have believed that he came from God. It makes more sense to take it as a question. However, either way has a sting to it.
- iii. Their belief and love will not change how they will respond when the hour comes. What hour is that? When the Shepherd is taken.

1. Here's what they will do: (Jn. 16:32) Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. **Yet** I am not alone, **for** the Father is with me.
 - a. It's not a time to soft pedal this. He tells the plain truth.
2. When it comes down to it, everyone responds in a way that seeks to save/preserve his or her life in the present. It is our nature. And in our own nature, we can do nothing else.
 - a. However, Christ's death and resurrection changes that. We are a new creation. If we repent and believe, God gives us the desire and strength to stand with Jesus when the whole world is against us.
 - b. The Holy Spirit cannot come until the payment has been made and we have believed. But when the Spirit comes, he will provide all we need in the day of battle. All praise to the Lord!
- iv. Jesus ends by looking ahead to a time beyond the resurrection when they are in him and in the world at the same time.
 1. In him, they may have peace.
 2. In the world, they WILL have tribulation.
 - a. If you are ready for heaven by being in Christ by faith, nothing this world can throw at you can take the peace that Jesus purchased from you.
 - b. Have a calm, steady assurance when the world is in turmoil, you know that no matter what happens, the resurrection to eternal life awaits you.
 - c. Therefore, take courage!
 - d. Why? Because Jesus has conquered the world.
 - i. And yes, he claimed victory even before it happened.
 - ii. America will be conquered. Indeed, every nation will be thrown down.
 - iii. The only Kingdom that will be standing at the end will be the Kingdom of God. And his Kingdom will never end.

V. Response

- a. The Lord's Supper