



Life & Joy

John 16:16-33

Confusion & Questions

- ❑ On the night before his death, Jesus kept telling his disciples that he was going away (*John 13:33; 14:2-3, 19, 28-30; 16:5-7, 10*). But they were confused. Read John 16:16-22.
- ❑ Jesus said, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me” (*16:16*). But the disciples keep asking, “What does [Jesus] mean by ‘a little while’?”
 1. What do *you* think Jesus means by his statement in verse 16?¹

Grief → Joy

- ❑ Within hours, Jesus will be taken away. The next day, he will be crucified (put to death on a cross). The world, which hates Jesus (*15:18*), will rejoice; but the disciples will weep, mourn, and grieve.² “But,” Jesus says, “...your grief will turn to joy” (*16:20*).
- 2. Why will their grief turn to joy? (*16:22*) Why do you think Jesus says, “...and no one will take away your joy”?³



📖 “...your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (*16:22b, ESV*)

Access & Understanding

- ❑ Jesus continues, “In that day [things will change]” (*16:23*). Read John 16:23-33. After Jesus’ resurrection, they will have greater understanding.⁴ They will also have a new way of approaching God the Father. They will ask the Father “in Jesus’ name” (*16:23-24*).⁵ As they see God actively work in answer to their prayers, their “joy will be complete” (*16:24*).

¹ Interpretations vary. Jesus probably means, ‘In a little while (when I am taken away and crucified) you will see me no more, but after a little while (after I have risen from the dead) you will see me.’ Others think Jesus is not talking about his resurrection, but either the coming of the Holy Spirit or his second coming (at the end of the age). Some think that Jesus’ words are intentionally ambiguous (that is, having more than one meaning).

² ‘weep’ (*klaīō*) – to loudly cry or wail; ‘mourn’ (*thrēneō*) – to wail; to weep or cry, especially in mourning for the dead; ‘grieve’ (*lupeō*) – to be sad; to be distressed. The disciples will do these things because of Jesus’ death.

³ Of course, when they see Jesus alive, their grief (because of his death) will no longer be appropriate! Furthermore, as they grow in their understanding of the meaning of his death, even his death will be included in their joy. For his death is necessary for new life, just as pain is necessary to bear a child (assuming no analgesic or anesthesia). When Jesus sees them, they will see Jesus, and their hearts will rejoice. The world cannot take away their joy because it is based in the victorious, everlasting resurrection life of Christ. It is a joy that is independent from the world.

⁴ To ask (*erōtaō*) Jesus (*16:23a*) may mean asking Jesus for things, thus having a similar meaning to asking (*aiteō*) the Father (*16:23b*). On the other hand, verse 23a may mean that the disciples will no longer need to ask Jesus for information because they will have greater understanding. The Holy Spirit will teach them all things and remind them of everything Jesus has said (*14:26*), and the Holy Spirit will guide them into all truth (*16:13*).

⁵ The disciples had already been taught to pray to the Father (*Luke 11:1-4*). But ‘praying in Jesus’ name’ is a privilege that belongs to the new order. ‘Praying in Jesus’ name’ means approaching God ‘in Jesus’ who opened the way into the presence of God (*Hebrews 10:19-22*). Jesus is the way to God. It also means praying in a way that is consistent with Jesus’ character and will. We ‘will receive’ when we pray according to His will (*16:24*).

- ❑ After Jesus' resurrection, he will "tell [his disciples] plainly" about the Father. At that time, their ability to understand will be greater.⁶ And they will be able to come directly to the Father in prayer because of their faith in Jesus and their love for him (16:26-27).⁷
 - 📖 Jesus says, "I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father" (16:28).
- ❑ The disciples think Jesus has already started speaking clearly (16:29). They think they understand, and they *do* understand important things, but their understanding is still lacking.

Trouble, Peace & Victory

- ❑ The disciples may believe (16:31) but Jesus knows their weakness. They will abandon Jesus when he is taken away and crucified.⁸ But Jesus will not be alone, for his Father is with him (16:32).⁹ Though the disciples would fail, they would later be restored and strengthened.
- ❑ Jesus says, "I have told you these things,¹⁰ so that in me you may have peace"¹¹ (16:33).

3. How can we have "peace" in this world of trouble? What makes this "peace" possible? What can we do to experience the peace and joy that no one can take from us? Be specific and practical.



- ❑ Jesus says, "*in me* you may have peace" (16:33). God is the source of true peace and joy. True peace and joy are found only "in Jesus." Through faith in Jesus, we are united with him, and we have *his* peace and joy. We experience this peace and joy through Christ-centered living, which includes Christ-centered thinking, attitudes and behavior.¹²

The Life & You

- We live in world of trouble, suffering, sadness and distress. Do you desire everlasting joy and peace? True joy and peace are found only in Jesus. Do you need to trust in him?
- As a believer, are you experiencing the joy and peace of Christ in your daily life? Reflect on footnote 12 and commit yourself to Christ-centered thinking, attitudes and behavior.

⁶ Jesus says he will no longer speak figuratively (*en paroimias*) as he has been doing. Some think Jesus is referring to particular figures of speech (15:1-8; 16:21) while others think he is referring to the obscurity of his language in general. Jesus' language has been hard to understand, but it is not entirely because of his choice of words. The disciples are unable to understand from their present perspective. Their post-resurrection change of perspective will allow greater understanding. Thus Jesus will speak more plainly to them. This is a common theme (13:7).

⁷ Jesus' words in verse 26 do not contradict Rom. 8:34 and Heb. 7:25 which speak of Jesus interceding for believers (also 1 John 2:1). These passages refer to Jesus' role as our heavenly advocate and high priest, continually securing for believers the benefits of his atoning death. They do not refer to Jesus taking our prayer requests to the Father.

⁸ Jesus had already said that Peter would deny him (13:37-38). When Jesus was arrested, 'everyone deserted him and fled' (Mark 14:50). After Jesus' death, his disciples were hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). At the cross, the only disciple mentioned is John, along with Jesus' mother and other women (19:25-27).

⁹ Later on the cross, Jesus cried out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34). This was the moment the Father turned away as Jesus bore the sins of the world. But Jesus' sense of abandonment was brief.

¹⁰ 'these things' includes everything Jesus has said in John 13:31-16:32.

¹¹ "Peace" has the general meaning of wholeness, wellness, harmony, security or fulfillment.

¹² Christ-centered living includes Christ-centered thinking. Christ has 'overcome the world.' Through his death and resurrection, he has defeated sin, death and all evil powers. This victory is not yet fully realized, but it will be when Christ returns. Christ said, 'I have overcome the world' anticipating his death on the cross. The world thought the cross was Jesus' defeat, but the cross was actually part of Christ's victory. As believers, let us remember that we can be victorious even in times of suffering and apparent defeat. In Christ we have the victory! Christ-centered living also includes Christ-centered attitudes and behavior. We need to reorient our values, goals and ambitions. We need to constantly stay aware of our dependence on him (15:1-4), and live in obedience to his commands (15:10-11).