

The Path To Joy Pt 2

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[0 : 00] Let's stand for the reading of God's word. John 16, beginning at verse 16 to 24. Jesus is speaking. A little while and you will see me no longer.

And again a little while and you will see me. So some of his disciples said to one another, what is this that he says to us? A little while and you will not see me.

And again a little while and you will see me. And because I'm going to the Father. So they were asking, what does he mean by a little while? We do not know what he's talking about.

Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him. So he said to them, is this what you're asking yourselves? What I mean by saying a little while and you will not see me. And again a little while and you will see me.

Truly, truly or amen, amen. I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but their sorrow will turn into joy.

[1 : 00] When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come. But when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish for joy that a human being has come into the world.

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.

In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name.

Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full. That is the reading of the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Thank you, choir, praise team. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you.

[2 : 33] Joy is the enjoyment of God and the good things that come from the hand of God. If our new freedom in Christ is a piece of angel fruit cake, joy is the frosting.

If the Bible gives us the wonderful words of life, joy supplies the music. If the way to heaven turns out to be an artist's steep climb, joy sets up the chairlift.

End quote. Black Presbyterians understood that. Black Presbyterians like Francis Grimke and George Gloucester in Philadelphia, John James W.C. Pennington and Samuel Cornish and William Drew Robeson and, of course, the great Henry Highland Garnett.

There's a history of black Presbyterians. There's a history of black Presbyterianism in this country that people don't always know about. Many of them, almost all of them, pastored black churches, but they pastored churches in white presbyteries.

And so many of them suffered and were run out sometimes of their churches because of racism. But they understood something.

[3 : 57] And you see it in black churches in particular, but all true churches of God, especially those who have suffered some things. There is this sense of joy.

These black Presbyterian pastors thrived under intense demonic hardship because they loved the frosting.

They danced to the music. And they rode on the heights in Christ. But it's not, that isn't just what God offers them.

He offers that same joy to all of us who are his children today. But the question is, are you on the path to kingdom joy? Are you embracing the path?

If you remember last time we saw that our Lord's path to joy isn't always clear. We don't always understand, like the disciples. We don't always understand what he's doing or even what he's saying in his word.

[5 : 02] Hopefully we at least know where we're going. But the path is a little difficult. We talk about joy. And yet, so often, where is it?

Sorrow and suffering seem to get in the way of it. But now here's the reality. Jesus' path to joy is often through sorrow.

Sorrow. That's the reality. That's the secret sauce. The hidden recipe. Trials aren't the problem.

They're the path. It isn't just sorrow and joy are in the way or antithetical to kingdom joy. They're God's way to it.

Here's a huge difference between the world and the kingdom of God. Jesus is, I'm going to refer to the passage. I'm not going to read it again because we got time.

[6 : 11] So, I hope you have your Bibles open. Here's a huge difference between the world and the kingdom of God. We are lamenting sin and its effects on the world. And the world is having a party.

Often the world shouts freedom. And we cry bondage. The world shouts happiness. And too often we end up crying death.

When Jesus is crucified, he's telling them, when he is crucified and buried, the forces of darkness, human and spiritual, will be rejoicing that he's finally out of the way.

But the disciples' hearts will be shattered. All of their hopes, personally, nationally, and spiritually, will be dashed to pieces.

Like someone taking a ceramic plate and dropping it from a 10-story window to the sidewalk. Weeping and lamenting in this passage is loud.

[7 : 21] It's not quiet tears falling down your cheek. It's loud. One of my neighbors passed away a couple weeks ago. Miss Marie was 97 years young.

Saint of God. Her family knew she was not long for this world. Sandy and I visited her in the hospital. And I told her, I said, Mom, you got your bags packed and ready to go, don't you?

And she did. She went in her sleep. But when her daughters, I was getting into my car, her daughters, she had several daughters, her daughters come running out the house, weeping and lamenting.

On the front lawn. I knew what had happened. I just stood there. And I just knew it had to be. So I went into the house to offer some comfort, hopefully.

And there in the house, two other, three other daughters were weeping and lamenting. It was loud. It was passionate. It was painful.

[8 : 30] This is what will happen with the disciples. Their grief will be great. Jesus is gone. They will lament. They will weep. They will wail.

They don't know the resurrection is coming. But Jesus is trying to tell them. He's trying to tell them.

He says their grief is only temporary. There will be a divine reversal. Jesus will defeat Satan, death, and sin.

Their sorrow will be turned to joy because of the resurrection. They will see him again. Don't you love his illustration? Good preachers always have good illustrations.

And Jesus, our Lord, is the master. And this illustration says more than we think, though. If you've ever given birth or watched a woman give birth, I watched four times.

[9 : 32] I was coaching, rubbing, and standing out of the way. It's a painful experience for the mother. Contractions and pushing are hard and exhausting.

But once you put the baby in that mother's arms, something happens. I mean, moments before, she was in anguish and the throes of labor.

But now there's joy and there's love radiating from her to this bundle of beautiful joy in her arms.

Right away, I've seen it. My wife, right away, she starts bouncing the baby. You know, I'm still trying to recover from the delivery. And she's bouncing the baby and cooing and kissing her and talking to her.

It's pure joy. The pain seems to be forgotten. She wasn't happy for the pain. But she's delighted that her labor was not in vain.

[10 : 39] It is striking that the birth of the child causes both sorrow and pain, sorrow and joy.

The birth of the child causes both. The mother doesn't literally forget the pain she went through. That's a myth, y'all. He's a, I think so. Did y'all really forget that stuff?

Oh, okay, never mind. I don't believe you forget. Not fully. But what happens is this. Okay, I'm going on a limb here, ladies, so you can correct me if you're a lady. If you want to, you can correct me later.

The joy of a living child overshadows the pain. The result is greater than the process. Oh, the men say amen, but no women say that.

I don't know what to do with that one. Oh, boy. Guys, we're in trouble. Maybe a dozen. I don't know. Y'all tell me. But what he's saying to the disciples is that when they see Jesus again, they will be so amazed, so in awe, so full of joyful worship, it would be like heaven come to earth.

[11 : 58] The disciples will look back on their sorrow and say it was worth it. they'll look back on their sorrow and likely say, why didn't we get it?

Now here's what I missed until recently. Here's what I missed. I'm going to let you into my pain. The pain and sorrow were necessary for the joy to come.

That which caused them sorrow now, that very thing that caused sorrow, now causes joy. Let's use the words in the text.

The absence or death of Jesus, which was the cause of weeping, lamenting, sorrow, and anguish, that's all in the text, were necessary realities in order for the joy of God to be theirs.

The joyful birth of a child must come through the hard pain of labor. Unless you have a C-section, and that's a whole different thing.

[13 : 10] But it's still, yeah, thank you. I watched that too. Remember that plate I mentioned to you earlier that was totally destroyed in many pieces, representing the disciples' hope in Jesus?

Guess what? The plate has been put back together. The impossible has occurred. The plate has been put back together because their joy and their hope has been put back together.

Hope in this life and the life to come has come together with great joy in the resurrection of Jesus. Do you really understand the resurrection and what it means?

You see, life on this side of the cross is painful. Resurrection. Resurrection joy yet comes to us in this veil of tears.

Paul's speaking about whether believers in his time should be judged harshly for eating food sacrificed to idols. Okay, why would they do that, by the way?

[14:22] It probably was cheaper. Discount meat. It was good meat. And so some of the believers will go down to the butcher shop and pick up the cheap meat.

But some people, but some Christians question the practice. So Paul has to correct them. In Romans chapter 14, 17 through 18, he says, for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. To serve Christ in righteousness, peace, and joy, he says, is acceptable to God.

And people, some people will go, wow. Wow. The kingdom is joy in the Holy Spirit.

The joy Christ gives, therefore, is resistant to sorrow because it depends on his resurrection. You see, when your happiness or your joy is dependent upon circumstances, it will always do this.

[15:37] Always. But when your righteousness and your joy are dependent upon Christ's resurrection and the hope that he gives by what he has done for us, you see, that's when joy can be a little bit more stable.

We have our moments. We're always going to have moments when we doubt it. Amen. But don't worry. He won't leave you. The Spirit of God will rise up in you at some point as you trust in Jesus and his finished work and joy once again will be yours because he's conquered the greatest cause of sorrow.

That is death. The meanings of Christmas and Good Friday become very clear at Easter because without Easter, the resurrection, Jesus' story ends in confusion, tragedy, disillusionment, defeat, and great sorrow.

It's the resurrection that causes us to look at the cross and not see merely a victim but a victor.

We don't just shed tears. We cry triumph because of the resurrection. Well, that's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15.

[17:04] If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins.

Then those who have fallen asleep, that is died in Christ, have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But he goes on to make it clear that Christ did rise.

That's chapter 15. Another one of the greatest chapters in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 15. He did rise, enjoy his hours through his suffering for us. The death of Jesus will cause them great sorrow but when he rises, the death of Jesus now causes them great joy.

It always amazes me. I mean, on Good Friday, we, you know, sometimes we all put on our sad faces and we want to be really sad on Good Friday. We come to Good Friday. We all, we all want to come, you know, Monday, Thursday happened.

Right now we come and we all come and we're trying to get into the spirit. I know, we're trying to get into the spirit of the thing but don't you understand? We're not them. We're not them.

[18:16] We're on the other side. We don't have to come to Good Friday with our head down. We come to Good Friday leaping and shouting, rejoicing because we know the end of the story.

Your sorrow will turn to joy in this life but not perfectly. It will come and go but it will be perfected in the coming of Jesus and the life to come and the new heavens and new earth and it will continue forever.

This is just a warm up. St. Grant Ferguson in his nifty little book, Lessons from the Upper Room, says, the true, true, the relationship between the disciples' pain and their coming joy is chronological but it will also be causal.

The pain is productive of the joy. In the life of discipleship, this is everyday life, there is a joy that seeketh me through pain. The glory is produced out of the raw material of the suffering.

Just as out of a woman's labor pains comes the joy of new life. the raw material of the suffering leads to joy.

[19 : 36] Hmm. But keep in mind also, resurrection, kingdom, joy in Jesus comes through suffering and is also resistant, resistant to suffering.

In this, we enter into our Lord's reality, our Lord's experience. Hebrews chapter 12, another great chapter of the Bible.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, that's chapter 11, the hall of faith, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that has set before us.

Endurance, brothers and sisters, through the fight, through the fire, through the pain, endurance. Why? Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

What kept Jesus going? Joy. Joy. The joy that he had as he walked with the Father and the joy ahead of him that would mean our redemption and his glorification.

[20 : 54] the glory was coming. We'll talk about it in chapter 17. He looked forward to the glory and you, you, you, each one of you who named the name of Jesus, you're a part of his joy.

Do you see yourself? That way. Do you recognize? Do you know who you are? You are part of the Lord's joy. Oh, what grace that we who are so sinful and messed up would be, would be the agent of joy to the Savior of the universe.

Wow. He is our example and our ability according to Hebrews. We persevere in indestructible joy for eternal joy.

What does he mean? What is this indestructible joy that is meant to continually animate us? Well, it's knowing that Christ's sufferings achieved our salvation, our redemption.

I'm using Bible words. I know I can't explain them all right now, but redemption, buying out of slavery, reconciliation, war is over, adoption into God's kingdom family. That's what we would, we who deserve death and everlasting poverty have been giving everlasting life and the riches of heaven.

[22 : 19] That's why Paul can encourage us in Philippians 4.4, and he's writing from prison, rejoice in the Lord always again, I will say, rejoice.

The second thing I want you to notice is Jesus' path to joy involves a new dimension to our prayers. verses 23 and 24. He says, in that day, in that day, that's the period of great rejoicing after his resurrection.

It corresponds to the little while he talks about too. In a little while, in that day, they go together. Our Lord will spend 40 days teaching them, according to Acts chapter 1, he will spend 40 days teaching them about the kingdom of God before he ascends.

It's in that whole period. no longer will the disciples ask Jesus for what they need, the counsel, the comfort, the provision, the wisdom, the direction, and protection, but now they will go directly to the Father.

They've not been doing that. That's different. They haven't been doing that because Jesus was with them and provided for all of their needs, even taxes, by the way.

[23 : 40] If you don't know that, read that. His death for our sins and resurrection for our justification have achieved for his disciples a new, direct relationship with the Father.

Father, the Father of Jesus is now our heavenly Father. We pray, that's why we pray as he taught us, our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, right?

Now we ask of the Father directly for things we need and would like, but it must be in Jesus' name, he says. Ask in my name. He said that several times, have you noticed that?

Several times, he keeps saying that over and over again, that we're to pray in his name. This is the new covenant blessing in Christ's kingdom. Jesus brings about our adoption by the Holy Father.

You've been adopted. Not just a group like the, not just as a group like in the old covenant nation of Israel. As a group, he spoke of Israel as his son.

[24 : 43] But now individually, he speaks of us as his sons and daughters. No Jew ever saw God as their father as an individual, but we as disciples of the Son of God do.

It's John 1, 12. I'm paraphrasing a little bit. Jesus, through faith in him, gives us the right to become children of God, born again by God's will, born into his family.

today. This sonship is a great gift of God's grace. It's not natural, but it's spiritual, adoptive sonship.

You know, legal adoption in their time and our time gives us a new name, privileges, maybe even inheritance.

But legal adoption does not change your nature or your character. Doesn't change that.

[25 : 59] Spiritual adoption gives us a new name, Christian, disciple of Jesus, follower of the way. It gives us privileges.

It gives, we can go to, we can go to Father directly. It gives us an inheritance with Christ. It gives us, though, a new nature, too. Spiritual adoption is much better than legal adoption.

Though legal adoption is good, don't get me wrong. Because it changes you. When God brings you into his family, he changes you.

Second Peter 1, 3 and 4. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. How? Through the knowledge of him, God, who called us to his own glory and excellence.

So through knowledge of God, we understand things, all things that we need for life and godliness. by which he has granted to us, here you go, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises.

[27 : 09] So that through them, the precious great promises, you may become, listen, partakers of the divine nature. Having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desires.

Divine, you are made union with Christ. You're abiding in the vine. That means the life of the vine, Jesus is divine, John 15, remember, that life that's in the vine is flowing through you.

You are made partakers of the divine nature. You're not divine, but his life lives in us. And that life living in us delivers us from the corruption of the world and works and goes to work on our sinful desires.

Because we grew up in the world. We were born in the world. And that system of way of thinking and living lives in us and is in our flesh. We are corrupted, but when we get adopted into the family of God and can call God Father and go to him directly, it's because he's given us something different, something new.

Our joy is ultimately found in enjoying our new relationship to God as our Father through Jesus and the power of the Spirit.

[28 : 38] Are you enjoying your new life with a new Father? Yes. I don't know what your earthly Father was like. He may have been wonderful.

He may have been absentee. He may have been downright horrible. It doesn't matter. You have a new one now.

And you gotta understand that. You gotta start grabbing hold of that that you have a new Father. I'm not saying you weren't hurt. That's stuff Jesus wants to help you with. He wants to work on that because you've been hurt.

Amen. I understand. Believe me, I understand that. But you got a heavenly Father now who will never hurt you. Who will only build you up and strengthen you and encourage you and nurture you and when you do go through hard times he ain't leaving you.

That's right. That's right. That's right. Amen. You may feel shattered by life but you have a heavenly Father who's right there to pick up the pieces and put you back together.

[29 : 43] Father. You have a Father. As Packer said, Father is the Christian name for God.

Are you going to your Father? Do you understand? You are welcome. The door is open. His door is never closed. He's never too busy.

No one will ever say, no, you can't go in there right now. Daddy's working. You'll never be told that. When you show up, the door will be wide open and you can come and fall on his shoulder, fall on his lap.

You can come and throw yourself on him. He'll never say, what are you doing? Come on, I'm busy. I'm working. You're wrinkling me. He'll never turn you away.

But do we go? How do we actually go? Do we actually go directly to the Father? What Jesus has won for us, do we go? This is the new era, the new creation breaking into the old.

[30 : 57] We can go directly to the Father. We can bask in his presence. Well, we're going to have communion, so I want to try to wrap this up a little bit.

But remember, kingdom joy is our resistance to the forces of darkness in Jesus' name. Sometimes that's, you may feel that all you got is God.

You may feel like those moments when you've been shattered and been crushed and you're wondering, man, where is my help coming from?

Does anybody understand what I'm going through? Yes. The Son of God understands. And the Father loves you.

And he's right there saying, come to me. Come to me. I'm right here. Go directly to me. You don't need saints to intervene for you.

[32 : 00] You don't need Mary to intervene for you. We go directly to the Father in Jesus' name. That of us suffers heresy. You don't, don't, the only mediator we have between us is God is named the Son of God, Jesus.

And he's opened the door and he's telling us, he's telling us in this text that we can go directly to the Father. To disbelieve that is to disbelieve him.

Go! Go often! Go quickly! That your joy might be full.

I'm told that in Great Britain, you know, we're so enamored with the royals there. I'm told that there's a certain flag that is raised whenever the king is present.

It's called the royal standard. It's not the Union Jack flag. It's the royal standard, different flag. But it's only raised when the king is present or queen is present.

[33:08] So whenever King George now rides in a car or goes into a place to dwell, they raise this particular flag. it says the king is present.

Hmm. Joy is the flag that we raise because the king is present.

Amen. That's good. And he's present with love over you. He's present with happiness over you.

He's present with singing over you. He's not present mad at you. Derek did it again. Well, he knew Derek was going to do it again.

Sorry, Derek. Pick on Roy. Roy did it again. He's not surprised you did it. He didn't want you to do it necessarily, but he's not surprised.

[34:10] And he loves you. He raised the flag. Rejoice like you did today. Lead us. Rejoice. He will never, listen, when the king, even when the king dies, they never lower that flag.

Even in death, we will never lower the flag. The joy gets better. So what do you prefer? Christianity? Jesus? Or Jesus? Hallelujah.

Total praise. The center of my joy. What do you want? What do you prefer? I tell you which one God prefers. It's the one that bears witness to the reality of Jesus.

Joy. And it's yours. It's yours. It's for you. Seize it. Seize him.

[35:24] Father, help us. It's amazing that sometimes we're not thought of as people who are joyful.

it's amazing that sometimes we give the impression that we've been baptized in lemon juice rather than baptized in the spirit.

And I know, Father, you know, the disciples experienced it. They're going to be hard times. You told us we're going to have tribulation. It's going to be hard. It's going to be pain. But Lord, help us help us not to allow the pain to take our eyes off of Jesus and the joy that is set before us.

Help us to skateboard on the pain into your joy. Help us to ski and surf on the pain and the sorrow right into your arms when you can remind us that you love us and you proved it and you prove it every day.

Be the center of our joy. Holy Father, sometimes our hallelujahs are hard fought, but we still say them.

[36:51] Hallelujah. Blessed be the Lord our God. Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Amen.