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# **Our Sorrow Is Turned To Joy In Christ**

## **JOHN 16:16-24**

### **Introduction**

1. Sixteen years ago, a movie came out titled "The Pursuit of Happiness."
2. It was based upon the true story of Chris Gardner an American businessman who in the 1980's struggled for nearly one year with homelessness while raising his toddler son.
3. After much hardship and many setbacks Mr. Gardner not only aces the stockbroker license exam, but is hired as a full-time stockbroker at Dean Witter Reynolds.
4. I have often thought about the title to this movie, "The Pursuit of Happiness."
5. How many people do you know who are pursuing happiness?
6. Oftentimes our happiness is dependent upon fragile things which can easily be taken from us — health, spouses, children, jobs, homes, possessions.
7. None of these are an adequate foundation for joy because of their transitory nature.
8. James once wrote, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." (James 4:13-14).
9. In our text tonight, Jesus is preparing His disciples for the overwhelming sorrow which they will experience in a few hours as they watch Him be arrested, mocked, scourged and crucified.
10. These men will be lost because they have believed Him to be the promised Messiah who was to come into the world.
11. In this conversation which Jesus has with His disciples in the upper room, He says, for the second time, "A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and

again a little while, and you will see Me” (John 16:16).

12. Because of this, the disciples keep asking one another, “What is this thing He is telling us?” (v. 17) and “What is this that He says?” (v. 18).
13. They finally say, “We do not know what He is talking about.” (v. 18).
14. Jesus knew they were asking each other about this, so He speaks words about sorrow being turned into joy.
15. As we look more closely at what Jesus says, I would like for you to consider two things with me:
  - a. The sorrows we all have in this world.
  - b. The lasting joy which Jesus brings

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### **I. The Sorrows We All Have In This World**

#### **A. THE FACT THAT WE ARE CHRISTIANS DOES NOT INSULATE US FROM EXPERIENCING SORROW**

1. As many of you already know, the deeper we have loved, the deeper our grief when that loved one is taken from us by death.
2. Though the apostle Paul said that we as Christians should not grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13), we still grieve.
3. The prophet Isaiah described our Lord as “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3).
4. You and I must recognize the reality of our sorrows.

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#### **B. THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR THE SORROWS WE FACE**

1. Disappointment when something doesn't go as we hoped.
  - a. On the day of Jesus' resurrection, two of His disciples were on their way to the village of Emmaus when Jesus approached them and began traveling with them.
  - b. They were talking about the things which had recently taken place in

Jerusalem, specifically Jesus' crucifixion.

- c. We see their disappointment in what they said, "we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21).
- d. These men along with the rest of the disciples had believed Jesus to be the Messiah who would reign over Israel and restore the kingdom as it was in the days of David.
- e. Instead, He had been falsely accused and executed.
- f. How often have you hoped and worked and prayed for something you believed to be God's will, only to be disappointed that it didn't come about?

**3a**

2. Confusion over something we misunderstood.

- a. Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die, (Matthew 16:21; 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25) but they didn't get it.
- b. Though these men understood part of the Scriptures, they didn't understand all of them:

1) Psalm 22

"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1, NASB95)

"They pierced my hands and my feet." (Psalm 22:16, NASB95)

"They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." (Psalm 22:18, NASB95)

2) Isaiah 53

"But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5, NASB95)

**3b**

3. Living in this fallen creation.

- a. Because of Adam's sin, all of creation was subjected to futility (Romans 8:20, 22)

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope” (Romans 8:20, NASB95)

“For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.” (Romans 8:22, NASB95)

- b. Though Christ conquered sin and death on the cross, we still live in bodies that are subject to disease and death.
- c. We are still engaged in an ongoing battle against the forces of this dark world, our own sinful nature, and the painful consequences of our sin.
- d. When others sin against us, we struggle with sadness and sorrow.

**3c**

4. The seeming triumph of evil people.
  - a. At present, thousands of citizens had died in Ukraine because of the desires of Russia's president.
  - b. History is filled with the names of those who have brought death and destruction to innocent lives.
  - c. In Psalm 73, the psalmist Asaph wrote initially of his envy of the wicked who seem to flourish in their abuses:

“For I was envious of the arrogant  
As I saw the prosperity of the wicked.  
For there are no pains in their death,  
And their body is fat.  
They are not in trouble as other men,  
Nor are they plagued like mankind.  
Therefore pride is their necklace;  
The garment of violence covers them.  
Their eye bulges from fatness;  
The imaginations of their heart run riot.

They mock and wickedly speak of oppression;  
They speak from on high.  
They have set their mouth against the heavens,  
And their tongue parades through the earth.”

(Psalm 73:3–9, NASB95)

- d. To see such things around us certainly brings grief and sorrow.

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## **II. Jesus Turns Our Sorrow Into Joy By . . .**

### **A. SHOWING US THE GLORY OF THE CROSS**

“Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.” (**John 16:20, ESV**)

1. Seeing their Lord suffer the suffering the mocking, scourging and crucifixion would certainly cause them great sorrow.
2. Notice, however, that Jesus does not say their sorrow would be replaced by joy, but that it would be turned into joy.
3. He uses the analogy of a woman in labor (John 16:21).

“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.” (**John 16:21, NASB95**)

4. In Philippians 3:10-11, the apostle Paul linked his own resurrection from the dead to his sharing in Jesus’ sufferings.

“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:10–11, NASB95)

5. In Romans 8:18, he said that “the sufferings of this present time are not

worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

6. In Hebrews 12:2-3, encourages us to “fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

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### **B. GIVING US AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE**

1. The disciples did not begin to see the big picture of what God was doing in history until after His resurrection.
2. Remember the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, with whom Jesus walked following His resurrection.
3. He asked them, “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:26).
4. Later that evening, as they were telling the others back in Jerusalem what had happened, He appeared to them, and after eating “a piece of broiled fish” in front them to prove that they weren’t seeing a ghost, “He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem’” (Luke 24:45-47).
5. That eternal perspective enabled them to later endure suffering for the sake of His kingdom.
6. As Paul would later write in his second letter to the Christians in Corinth, “momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Corinthians 4:17-18a).

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### **C. GRANTING US ACCESS TO THE THRONE OF GRACE**

“Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.” (John 16:23b–24, NASB95)

1. In Hebrews 4:16, the writer encourages us with these words, “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.” (Hebrews 4:16, NASB95)
2. Jesus death on the cross has granted us access to the very throne of God.
3. Here, Jesus encouraged His disciples, and us by extension, to “ask the Father for anything in [His] name,” promising that God “will give it to [us].”
4. To ask in Jesus name is to ask in accordance with His will for those things which will advance His kingdom and glory.
5. There may be times when He doesn’t grant our request because it isn’t what is best for us or it doesn’t bring glory to Him.
6. However, when our requests are granted, He makes our joy full.

## **Conclusion**

1. Remember, none of us are exempt from sorrows in this life, and some of us may have more than what we consider our fair share.
2. But know this, He is also able to turn our sorrow into joy.
3. Let us learn to rejoice and be glad in Him.
4. May we strive to see God’s work from an eternal perspective.
5. Let us spend time continually before God’s throne asking for those things which will help us bring glory to Him and expand His kingdom.
6. I believe you will be surprised at the results!