

Christ-Followers Have Joy!

In This Series We Have Been Learning That...

1. True believers have identifying, unmistakable characteristics.
2. Each of us should evaluate ourselves based on these characteristics and then ask ourselves if we are truly “remaining” in Christ.

The Change from Sorrow to Joy

“In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

¹⁷Some of His disciples said to one another, “What does He mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” ¹⁸They kept asking, “What does He mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what He is saying.” ¹⁹Jesus saw that they wanted to ask Him about this, so He said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’?” ²⁰I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²²So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.” - John 16:16-22

Jesus explained His death and resurrection to His disciples in terms of

“a little while.” (micron - μικρόν)

He has said this twice before:

“My children, I will be with you only a little longer...” - John 13:33

“Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me...” - John 14:19

He said this to give them hope.

But they didn’t understand and were frustrated about two things: the term “a little while” and “going to the Father.”

“...because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer...” - John 16:10

Jesus explains further beginning with “amen, amen.”

Jesus tells them that they will respond in an opposite way from the world. (They will grieve while the world rejoices!)

But then Jesus explains that their grief would be “turned into joy.” *Note that it will not be replaced with joy, but transformed. This is a clear reference to the resurrection.*

Jesus gives an illustration that anyone could understand: it is the same baby that gives a woman great pain, but great joy.

And the joy of Christ would be permanent.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.” - John 17:13

“Then they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.”

- Luke 24:52

The Completion of Our Joy

“In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. ²⁵“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷No, the Father Himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.” ²⁹Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. ³⁰Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.” ³¹“You believe at last!” Jesus answered. ³²“But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. ³³“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” - John 16:23-33

In that day — means after His death and resurrection. The disciples, (and all believers) are able to go to the Father directly in the name of Jesus.

In prior times, there was a need for a priest.

But since the cross, we have direct access to the Father in the name of Jesus (with the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit).

“The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” - Mark 15:38

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body...” - Hebrews 10:19,20

Jesus wanted the disciples to understand this principle completely and so He spoke without “figures of speech.”

It seems that at this point, the disciples understood something that had not been clear before.

“This makes us believe that you came from God.” - John 16:30

Jesus is pleased by their new-found belief but also warns them of the trouble to come. (32)

Jesus declares that although He will be apart from the disciples, He will not be alone because of His Father’s presence.

He declares that peace (and joy) comes only “in Him” and encourages them to be strong in what they are about to face.

Joy can make you feel good, but it isn’t a feeling. It is the calm assurance that God loves you, hears you, and has your best interest close to His heart!

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