

## Sermon: But Joy Comes in the Morning

Scripture: John 16:16-33

Sunday, October 13, 2019

Last week our guest preacher Andrew Bodden preached from John 6, the feeding of the 5000plus. The highlight of his sermon titled, It doesn't Take Much was the illustration he gave of how he and a bunch of teenagers with no money built a house for this woman who was the cook of their gathering. The bottom line was that you can accomplish anything for God if you add human willingness and God's help. I hope that message will stay with us as we hope to accomplish God's mission through this church. Switching to our journey through John, in the previous week I preached a sermon focusing on one very specific aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit which is continuing the work of deepening the revelation of who God is that was started by God the Father and expanded on by God the Son. Looking at the three persons of the Trinity this was is not to simply come up with some new academic understanding of the Trinity but to help us to carry on this process of witnessing to the revelation of God through our lives as we bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit in ourselves.

Today we are going to look at the next few verses, from 16 to 33. In this section Jesus deals with two very contradictory emotions, sadness and joy. Jesus knows that the disciples are going to experience immense grief in the coming days and he wants to prepare them for the emotional roller coaster that awaits them from his crucifixion to his resurrection. But if they don't handle the grief well, then the future ministry will be in jeopardy. So Jesus prepares his disciples by reframing the sadness they are going to experience..

Before we get into our passage, I think it is very important for me to point out to you what Jesus is not doing and has never done. You see, in the original brochures

advertising people to sign up to be disciples of Jesus, one thing that you would have never seen were any promises that being a disciple would make your life a smooth sailing ride. In fact Jesus was very open says, this world is going to treat him very badly and if you are his servants, you are also going to be treated badly. Jesus also tells his prospective disciples, “if anyone wants to be his disciple, they have to pick up the cross and follow him”. Given this very clear setting of expectations, it is a real tragedy that this country was the birthplace of the “prosperity Gospel” in which people are invited to come to Christ on the basis of all the great things that Jesus Christ **can do** for you, rather than extending as invitation based on what Jesus Christ **has already done** for you and me.

Anyway so going back to Jesus’ straight talk with his disciples, Jesus now tells his disciples that *“in a little while he is not going to be visible to them and then in a little while they would be able to see him again. And not only that but that they are going to weep and mourn over what is going to happen to him, and when they mourn the world was going to rejoice”*. Wow, that is as tough and as straight as it gets. Jesus is aware that his disciples are going to experience a lot of emotion pain over what is going to happen over the next few days and he warns them about this pain that were going to experience from seeing what is going to happen to him. But the way Jesus handles the anticipated pain of his disciples is interesting. There are three things that he does that are important and need to be highlighted.

First, Jesus also does not make any attempt to shield them from this pain. He does not hide what is going to happen to them. He tells them that they are going to be filled with sorrow and sadness about what the world will do to himself. He also warns them that later on they being his disciples are going to experience persecution first hand. In fact he even lays out the reasons, earlier in chapter 15. He says that the world hates him because he does not belong to this world. And guess what, I chose you to come out of

this world. So now you all don't belong to this world. And because you don't belong to this world, the world will hate you and make your life difficult. It just goes with the territory. So the first thing that Jesus does about the pain they are going to experience is to fully forewarn them about it. But he also explains why they will experience pain. It is all about the clash of the values of his kingdom and that of the world. When you are a Jesus disciple you become a square peg in a round hole. And those edges on the square peg are going to hurt. But the hurt should not surprise you because Jesus talked about the pain to come many many times.

The second thing I want to point out and I will only mention it briefly because this is from the next chapter is that Jesus prays for the spiritual protection over his disciples. When you peek ahead into Jesus' high priestly prayer, he prays that his disciples will be kept wholesome and pure and untainted by the attacks of the evil one. In other words, they will not just succumb and go back into the world or allow themselves to be compromised and tainted by the world. In other words, that his disciples will not allow their square pegs to become round again just because it makes life easier. We will go into more details later when we are in chapter 17. But the beautiful and important thing is that Jesus prays spiritual protection for his disciples.

But there is a third thing that Jesus does to help his disciples cope with the upcoming pain that is the focus of our section today. Jesus reverses the pain and sorrow in an amazing way. You see worldly advice would be to tell his disciples either what to do to avoid the pain or to give them ways to kill the pain. Jesus instead does something fascinating. Jesus changes the relationship between pain and joy. To do that, Jesus presents this amazing analogy of childbirth. He says, *"When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world"*. Then Jesus tells his disciples, *"So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy"*. What Jesus is doing is this. He tells them

that what they are about to go through over the next few days is going to be painful, but it is a pain with a purpose. Like the pain of a woman who is experiencing labor pains. You see while the pains of childbirth are great, that pain is directed to a strong purpose. And in the end when the child is born, the mother holding this child in her arms, seeing the wonder of new life she has brought forth forgets all about the pain she just went through. Not only is the mother full of joy at this point but it is because she was willing to go through the pain that she was able to experience the joy. To use another analogy, Jesus is saying to his disciples the pain you will experience is almost like an ingredient you put in the oven that after the cooking process changes form and miraculously becomes joy.

Jesus is doing something really fascinating here from his knowledge of how you and I think. You see, there is a human tendency to make the last thing you experience about the person as the defining thing about the person. I don't know if you have had the experience of catching yourself tell a family member or spouse, saying something like, "you always leave your socks on the floor" or "you always do this or that". That word "always" is using the last impression to define the whole of the relationship. Last impressions are powerful because that is how memory works. So imagine if the disciples permanently defined Jesus by the last impression of him looking like he was defeated on the cross and then did something bad to themselves. If that was the case we would have lost all 12 of his disciples instead of losing just one, right? So even though the disciples would deny him and leave him, it could have been even worse if Jesus had not mentally prepared them for what it to come by introducing the idea of the reversal of emotions in Christ. Let me explain.

It is like Jesus is saying, if you want to experience the joy of bringing new life into this world you have to go through the labor pains. What he really wants to say is that if you really want to experience the joy of seeing he conquer death, you have to go through

the pain of seeing me get crucified. This is not true of all pain. I want to make that very clear. Pain caused by someone who crashes a car because they were driving drunk does not qualify for this reversal. Some pain in this world is caused by stupidity or sin. That pain is more of a punishment that will hopefully prevent us from making that mistake again. But Jesus is saying there are some forms of pain that are the result of a culture clash with the world that comes with being a disciple of Jesus. That pain is rewarded by Jesus with a grand reversal into a joy that no body can take away from you.

Sometimes Jesus disciple's don't just deal with pain but they have to deal with anxiety as well. Anxiety that comes with false accusations or slander or any kind of situation. But Jesus is offering a reversal for that kind of anxiety as well. Look at the last verse of our section today, the famous words of Jesus in John 16:33 that I will quote in full, ***"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world"***. Did you notice the reversal here? Jesus is saying, in this world you will have many trials and sorrows. But guess what? The anxiety that comes normally with those trials and sorrows will be transformed to a sense of deep peace. How? Because Jesus has overcome everything this world can throw at you. Every human being falls for sin. Jesus comes along and overcomes it. Every human being dies. Jesus comes along and is put to death and overcomes death as well.

Now Jesus who overcame both sin and death is saying, I want to come and live inside of you. So that I can help you too overcome sin and death. Is there a bigger or better offer than this in the universe? No there isn't! The offer is truly awesome. Yes, there will be challenges because if you do take up the offer you will now become a square peg in a round hole and many of the things of this world that never bothered you before will begin to bother you. But guess what? Jesus' plan is that when every round peg that he wants to transform has been transformed into a square peg, then he will come back

from heaven where he is right now and change the entire universe. At that time all the holes will become square. And all those people who refused to turn into square pegs will be stuck with being round pegs in square holes for all eternity.

So friends, do the math. Which is better, a discomfort for a few years during which your pain and troubles will be transformed into peace and joy that no one can take from you, or comfort for a few years in this life and pain of a whole eternity in a completely Godless corner of the universe. If you have not already, I invite you to choose the discomfort of being a Jesus disciple right now because Jesus' promise to his disciples is this, you will experience a night of great pain and suffering, but joy will come to you in the morning. It is a joy that no one can snatch away from you.

And if you have been walking as a disciple for sometime and are getting tired of the pain and tribulations of this world, then be patient. Do not grow weary my friends. Do not give up on the mission Jesus Christ has given you. Do not grow tired of doing good. Because Jesus Christ has promised to return very soon to reverse all the pain and suffering of this world. May all of us experience this great reversal that Christ has promised with joy overflowing. Let us pray.