

## THE GOSPEL OF

## JOHN

Peace in  
the Storm

## INTRODUCTION

John 16:16-33

The late Scottish preacher, Alexander Whyte, observed that we all tend to hang heavy weights on the thinnest wires (source unknown). He meant that we hang our happiness on fragile things that easily and quickly can be taken from us: health, mates, children, jobs, homes, or possessions. These are all good blessings from the Lord. But they're inadequate as a foundation for lasting joy, because they're all so uncertain and transitory.

While any major loss is emotionally painful, it's crucial that we learn how to work through such losses biblically, because we're all going to face them. Peter (1 Pet. 5:8-9) indicates that it is precisely in times of suffering that the devil seeks to destroy our faith. I've seen many believers who have wiped out spiritually because they didn't know how to face suffering biblically.

For example, some have the mistaken notion that because they believe in Jesus, He will protect them from major suffering. When tragedy hits, they feel that God has abandoned them. Others were taught to claim healing by faith. When that didn't work, they were told that they didn't have enough faith. Others have been under the impression that it is unspiritual to grieve or shed tears. So they tried to smile and say, "Praise the Lord," around other Christians, but they were dying inside.

In our text, Jesus is preparing the disciples for the overwhelming sorrow that they would experience in the next few hours as they watched Him be arrested, mocked, scourged, and crucified. Their world would come crashing down around them. They had put their hopes and staked their futures on their belief that Jesus was the promised Messiah of Israel. The previous Sunday, their hopes were high as Jesus rode into Jerusalem to the "Hosannas" of the crowd. But now, everything that they had hoped for would come to a sudden, shocking end as they watched their Lord suffer and die. Jesus prepares them (and us) for suffering by teaching that:

*The risen Lord Jesus will turn our sorrows into lasting joy as we look to Him in faith and prayer.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-86-sorrow-turned-joy-john-1616-24>

## OPEN IT

1. What has been the most incredible answer to prayer in your life?

## READ IT

John 16:16-33

## EXPLORE IT

2. What phrase did Jesus use that the disciples did not understand?
3. Jesus tells the disciples that their sorrow will turn into what?
4. What illustration does Jesus use to help the disciples understand?
5. What do you have to do in order to receive from God?
6. Where did Jesus say he was going when he would leave the world?
7. In the world we will experience \_\_\_\_\_, but in Jesus we will have \_\_\_\_\_.

## APPLY IT

Notice that the concern of the disciples here is on how long this absence is going to last. Jesus had said, "A little while, and you will see me no more," and his disciples had immediately picked up that phrase, "a little while." Their hearts clutched with fear, they said to themselves, "How long does he mean?" Their attention is on that, and also on his words, "because I go to the Father." They said, "Why does this have to happen? What does he mean, 'because I go to the Father'?" You can see that the focus of their concern is on "When?" and "Why?"

If you and I had been there, that is exactly what we would have asked! We are always concerned about how long a trial is going to last, and about, "Why we have to go through that, anyway?" Are these not the questions we inevitably ask whenever we have trouble -- "Why?" and "How long?" But you notice that when Jesus answers the troubled disciples he ignores the whole matter of time. He repeats the questions, so they know he heard what they asked, but he never answers their questions directly. His answer stresses the process, and the result which is certain to follow. In other words, Jesus isn't concerned with the "Why?" and "How long?" but with the "How?" and the "What?" He makes clear to them that a period of sorrow is inevitable. He cannot spare them, cannot save them from it. There will be a time when they will weep and lament and be in sorrow, and when the world around will be rejoicing. "But," he says, "your sorrow will be turned into joy." How long it takes is not significant; the inevitable result is the important thing.

That is a very important lesson to learn. I've been saying to the Lord, "How long, how long do I have to go through this?" And the Lord's emphasis is strictly upon what is coming at the end, the joy which is certain. To illustrate this, our Lord used the beautiful figure of childbirth. A mother goes through a time of sorrow when her child is being born, but later she experiences a time of joy when the baby is delivered.<sup>2</sup>

**8. The disciples' lives were about to be turned upside down with the arrest, prosecution, and death of their Master. Jesus promised them that they would once again experience joy. How have you found this to be true in your own life? What great sorrows has the Lord turned into joy? And which ones are you still working on?**

**9. What does it mean to you that God will hear your prayers and listen to you so you can commune with Him? How is this truth a rare and sacred privilege?**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.raystedman.org/thematic-studies/upper-room/the-abiding-principles>

**10. How or why does Jesus transform the world's joy into sorrow and the believer's grief to joy? How is He real, alive, and working in your life today?**

**11. Jesus admits that his message has been hard to understand. What aspect of the Christian life would you like a better understanding about?**

**12. Where is the world bringing tribulation in your life right now? Spend some time in passages like 2 Corinthians 4:5-18 and Romans 8:31-39 - How does the truth of Christ conquering on our behalf encourage you to take heart, have peace, rejoice in the face of tribulation?**

**13. There are many people who say that they believe in and even love God but they do not believe in Jesus as God in the flesh. Why is it critical to believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Why is it critical to love Jesus?**

**14. Does our world today expect and embrace difficulty? How have you seen Christians embrace difficulty as something God allows and even ordains for them?**

**15. How does our culture's view of suffering affect how people often respond to it? How has it affected you?**