

## COMMUNION SERIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### The ONE Who Can Turn Your Sorrow into Joy

John 16:16-33

Sorrow is expected by anyone living in this fallen world. Inevitably, every person will at some moment face sorrow to some degree or another. It may be sorrow brought on by grief due to loss of a loved one, unmet financial needs, and trouble in one's marriage/family or ministry. Christians are not spared from sorrow and yet they are commanded to be joyful at all times. As a result, some are now wrestling with these mind-boggling questions: "Can we really live in joy in this world?" "Is it possible for us, knowing all of the horrible things that are going on around us, to rejoice and be of good cheer?" But we, believers, are convinced that whatever we may have to go through now, Jesus is the One who can turn our sorrow into joy.

This same truth is what the Master desired His disciples to believe as He prepared them for what was ahead. Earlier in His conversation with the troubled and grieving disciples, Jesus mentioned the existence of the coming conflict (persecution) from the world that hates them (15:18-16:4) and also His impending absence as He returns to the Father who sent Him. To console them, He spoke of the coming Counselor (Holy Spirit) who will guide them into all truth. But unless the Son goes away, the Spirit will not be sent (16:5-15). Subsequently, He further added in today's passage that "in a little while," after His death, the disciples will see Him again which confused them at the onset (16:16-18) but eventually clarified as referring to His resurrection (16:19-22) and then also to His Spirit's abiding presence that will take away their grief. Moreover, He again comforted them with a promise that they will receive whatever need they ask before a loving Father in His name (16:23-24) and also experience peace coming from a victorious Savior in the midst of their imminent trouble (16:25-33). Jesus was aware that much sorrow awaited the disciples in just a few hours' time; yet He also knew that a much greater joy awaited them as well. There are three truths to believe and live out from the Lord's teaching that can turn your sorrow into joy.

#### 1. When You See His Presence in Your Moment of Grief (vv. 16-22).

*20. . . You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. <sup>21</sup>A 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. <sup>22</sup>So 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.*

While Jesus' death brought great grief to the disciples (16:20-22a), His resurrection brought them great joy (16:22b; 20:20). His sympathizing presence is seen today spiritually as His Spirit indwells in you (Rom. 8:9) and will someday be seen physically when He returns (Rev. 21:3-4; 22:4). Just like the risen Lord, you too whether dead or still alive someday will live forever in His presence (John 11:25-26a) together with your departed loved ones who believed in His name. Rejoice in the Lord always for in His omnipresence He can soothe your soul from grief all the time and everywhere (Psa. 139:7-10). As Jesus has comforted you in your grief, may you also

comfort those who are grieving by testifying of His Spirit's presence (1 Pet. 1:8; Matt. 28:20b) that you have seen in your life so they too will rejoice! *If you believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, His Spirit's abiding presence is there in you, and one day He will return for you, would you still have any reason to be in grief?*

## **2. When You Savor His Provision in Your Moment of Need (vv. 23-31).**

*<sup>23</sup>"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. <sup>24</sup>Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."*

While Jesus gave disciples the privilege of prayer that gains a direct access to the Father, their practice of prayer must be made in His name (16:23-24). His satisfying provision is savored today as the Father answers your prayer (14:13-14; 15:7-8, 16). Just as the Son prayed to the Father, you too can directly pray to Him in Jesus' name (16:26-27; Heb. 4:16). Rejoice in the Lord always for in His omniscience He can supply all of your needs (Matt. 6:31-33; Phil 4:19). As Jesus has satisfied you in your needs, may you also satisfy those who are needy by praying for them (and sharing with them) His Father's provision (Phil. 4:18-19) that you have savored so they too will rejoice! *If you believe that you will receive whatever you ask in Jesus' name, would you still have any reason to be in need?*

## **3. When You Sense His Power in Your Moment of Trouble (vv. 32-33).**

*<sup>33</sup>"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! [*"be of good cheer," KJV*] I have overcome the world."*

While the disciples of Jesus may have trouble in this world (16:32), they have peace in Him (16:33). His sustaining power is sensed today as He mightily uses you in spite of your present troubles (2 Cor. 4:7-10; 12:9-10). Just as the victorious Lord conquered sin, death, and Satan himself (the prince of this world), you too can be a conqueror through Him (1 John 4:4; 1 Cor. 15:57). Rejoice in the Lord always for in His omnipotence He can strengthen you from all kinds of trouble (Psa. 46:1; Rom. 8:35-37). As Jesus has cheered you up in your trouble, may you also cheer up those who are troubled (2 Cor. 1:3-4) by showing them the Son's power that you have sensed in your life so they too will rejoice! *If you believe that Jesus has overcome the world, do you still have any reason to be in trouble?*

Do you honestly know the joy of the Lord? Are you rejoicing in Him? Christ alone is the One who can ultimately flood you with fullness of joy. It is not pleasing circumstances such as the absence of grief, need or trouble that can give you joy, but the experience of His presence, provision, and power in the midst of all your life's sorrowful moments. As you believe it, He delights to declare to you at this very moment that *"you will rejoice and no one will take away your joy" and "your joy will be complete."* Therefore, be convinced that whatever you may have to go through now, Jesus is the One who can turn your sorrow into joy!