

"Your grief will be turned into joy."

*John 16:16-22*

*"A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." 17 Some of His disciples then said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" 18 So they were saying, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is talking about." 19 Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'? 20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. 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. 22 "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.*

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Start with the big picture:

/We have now arrived at the conclusion of the farewell discourse: John 16:16-33. \ This is the final message Jesus has for His disciples before He leaves them.

/Jesus basically picks up where He left off at the end of chapter 14. \ Let's return to the last few verses of chapter 14 now.

*John 14:28-31*

*28 "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.*

*29 "Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. 30 "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is*

*coming, and he has nothing in Me; 31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.*

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/Jesus talked about what was going to happen soon, in a matter of days.\ Just like we saw just now in chapter 16:16-22.

/He talked about going away from His disciples and then returning.\  
Just like we have in John 16:16.

/Notice here that Jesus emphasized that He was going to the Father.\ He links the joy of the disciples to His return to the Father. He talks about loving the Father and doing His will. That means that He will go to the cross and die.

/He talks about the world in both passages.\ Here though, He puts a spotlight on the ruler of this world. Jesus will defeat the ruler of this world at the cross.

So John 16:16 and following picks up where John 14:31 left off.

/In between, we have the unique discourse of John 15:1-16:15. \

No dialogue. No questions from the disciples. Only Jesus speaks. And He is speaking of future things, although He gives no time frame.

He speaks of new and unprecedented things, like the Vine and the Branches, and the convicting ministry of the Spirit to the world.

And then, starting in John 16:16, Jesus picks up where He left off in chapter 14.

*John 16:16-19*

*"A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." 17 Some of His disciples then said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" 18 So they were saying, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is talking about." 19 Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'?"*

/Once again, the disciples are baffled by Jesus's words.\

“What is this thing He is telling us?” “We do not know what He is talking about?”

/One phrase in particular has them stumped: “in a little while”. Notice that there are two “in a little while”s.\

They may well have wondered, how long is a little while?

A little while and then – “you will no longer see Me”.

/Something will happen that will cause them to no longer see Him. What is that?\

And another little while and then - “you will see Me”.

/After another event, they will see Him again. What event will that be?\

And why? This doesn’t make sense to them at all.

Notice that this time Jesus confined His statement to the two little whiles.

/The disciples added “because I go to the Father”. \

It’s never a good idea to add words to a statement in the word of God – especially when Jesus is speaking!

The disciples link the 2 “little whites” with “I go to the Father”. This no doubt adds to their confusion.

/But Jesus puts that aside and deals first with the 2 “little whites” by themselves.\

That will be enough for now. Jesus is after clarity, not complexity. Our God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

/The hour has now come upon them. He had told the Jews and then His disciples that this hour was coming, and now it’s here.\

Now that events are quickly unfolding -indeed, they are right at the door - Jesus needs them to simply focus on the immediate future. One day at a time. Indeed, one hour at a time.

When the fighting is fierce, the goal is to survive and fight another day.

/They are about to enter a time of intense sorrow and grief. \  
They will need something to hold onto – like now, this very evening!

/They need reassurance that it's not the end; the darkness will soon give way to the light. \ Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.

They cannot bear more until their grief turns into joy. Then it will all make sense.

So we are going to take things as He did with them that night: one step at a time.

With that in mind, today we simply seek to understand the 2 "little whiles" and what they lead to. It's marvelous; and more than enough for one sitting.

/We are now going to listen to the answer that Jesus gave to their question.\

*John 16:19 Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'? 20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.*

*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. 22 "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.*

First, and it's striking – Jesus doesn't answer their question at all – at least not the way they thought that He should.

He doesn't tell them how long a little while is. He doesn't define the events in view.

/He doesn't give them what they want; He gives them what they need!\

And what they need now is the right preparation.

/ Here's what is about to befall you, and here's you deal with it.\

Grief shortly; but shortly after that, joy. Anticipating that joy gets you through the pain. /For the joy that was set before Him, Jesus endured the cross (Heb 12:2).\



*20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.*

I won't leave you in suspense any longer.

/He is preparing them for His impending death (grief), and a few days after that, His resurrection from the dead (joy!)\

And He gives them a vivid illustration of what He means:

*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.*

/A woman in labor has pain for a little while. That pain is turned into joy when she sees her new-born child. That joy will return again and again.\

So too with the disciples.

/Their grief will be brief; their joy will never end.\

*22 "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.*

Jesus will take their grief away; no one will take their joy away.

Momentary light affliction produces unending joy, far beyond comparison.

Back to the disciples that night in the upper room.

/Before the next day ends, Christ will be crucified, and they will scatter.\

/They won't see Him, because He will be buried.\

/But on the third day, Jesus will be resurrected from the dead by His Father. Then the disciples will see Him again. Then the joy begins.\

*John 20:19-21*

*So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*

*/In between the two little whiles, Jesus accomplishes the salvation of the world.\*

*Rom 4:23-25*

*23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.*

*/This is the gospel of our salvation. \*

*1 Cor 15:1-8*

*15 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.*

*3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*

And the word went out, and the joy spread.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ changed the course of human history. /God's holiness was thereby vindicated. Sins were paid for. God and sinners reconciled. Believers declared righteous by God forever. \

And now we can rejoice in the Lord always.