

**Look Beyond**  
Series: His Last Day  
John 16:5-7, 16-22  
April 10, 2022

Welcome again to worship.

I invite you to turn to page 4 in your bulletin, or if you are online, grab your spiritual journal, your Bible, and turn to John 16.

Our Lenten series has been “His Last Day,” where we are looking at some very important chapters in the Gospel of John, chapters 13-16. They are often called the Upper Room Discourse, for Jesus taught His disciples in the Upper Room the night before He was crucified.

Now, I have been telling you that this series came from a meme:

“Sometimes I joke about what I’d do if I had one day left to live. Eat junk food, go crazy, etc. Today it hit me: Jesus knew. And He washed feet.”

But I have also be looking at these passages for what they really are: Jesus’ final words and teachings to His disciples before the history changing event of the crucifixion. As I point out in my book “Hanging On In An Upside Down World,” Jesus’ arrest, conviction, then execution were devastating events in the lives of His followers. They hid away. Their worlds had turned upside down.

Jesus knew it would be so, even warning them numerous times before, and even that night. Still, He spent time sharing with them comforting words, primarily about the coming Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

And we have this passage today, from John 16:5-7:

*“But now I am going away to the One who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.”<sup>1</sup>*

Then verses 16-22:

*“In a little while you won’t see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again.” Some of the disciples asked each other, “What does he mean when he says, ‘In a little while you won’t see me, but then you will see me,’ and ‘I am going to the Father’? And what does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand.” Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, “Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won’t see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.”<sup>2</sup>*

When you are in the midst of your pain and suffering, when you feel as if your world has turned upside down, all you can do is focus on the pain. When you smash

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<sup>1</sup> John 16:5-7 (NLT2)

<sup>2</sup> John 16:16-22 (NLT2)

your thumb with a hammer, when you twist your ankle, when you are having a kidney stone, when you are delivering a baby, all you can think about is the pain.

Likewise, when you watch as your loved one is wasting away from disease, when the person who you care about is facing challenges in life, when you are tired of the sorrow you see, it is easy to fixate on that issue. You mourn, you question, you fret, you can even doubt God's sovereignty and plan.

So, before He allowed Himself to be taken into custody and fulfilling the Father's will for Him, Jesus told His disciples four things. And these are four things for us today when we are facing our own upside down world:

**First, Look Beyond the Next Few Days.**

Verse 16:

*In a little while you won't see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again.*<sup>3</sup>

He told them His time was nearly up. In just a short time – maybe 3-4 hours – He would be arrested and hauled off to the chief priest's house. Their three years of walking and talking with Jesus would be up. The last vision of Him for most would be with Roman and Temple guards surrounding Him in the darkness of Gethsemane.

In fact, those three days would be the darkest they had ever experienced, but they would not last. Jesus assures them that it would only be for a short time. Sunday evening, He will appear to those gathered in the Upper Room. He will rise again and show Himself to them.

Sometimes, when we go through trials, we wonder where Jesus is. We worry that He has left us on our own to face the struggle ahead of us. Often, it is because we have decided to go it alone. We've haven't asked Christ to be part of our struggle, and He will never be rude and barge into a place where He is not welcomed. As such, we face the battle alone, and if it is a spiritual battle against spiritual forces, if we go out there by ourselves, we will lose, for if you are battling a spiritual battle, you need a spiritual warrior to fight on your side, and that is Christ.

Your struggle will only be for a short time. Look beyond the next few days.

**Second, Look Beyond Me.**

Now, that might sound strange. "Look beyond Jesus?" But that's exactly what He said. Verse 7:

*But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.*<sup>4</sup>

Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit here, because while He was on the Earth, He was limited to one place at a time. While He was in Jerusalem, He could not be in Galilee. His leaving meant He could be present to the whole world through the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit would be sent by Jesus to live in the disciples of Jesus as they continue the mission of Jesus to call other disciples to follow Jesus. We need the Spirit for many reasons, but the context of this promise is our mission as disciples. Jesus doesn't send the Holy Spirit so we can have an invisible butler to bring us cold beverages as we lounge around the pool. He sends the Spirit to empower us to accomplish his mission.

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<sup>3</sup> John 16:16 (NLT2)

<sup>4</sup> John 16:7 (NLT2)

Imagine an ancient king deciding to take a trip to visit one of his cities on the far side of the country. He sends his trusted lieutenant ahead of him to get everything ready for the trip. The day of the trip comes, and his caravan starts out. When he arrives at the city, nothing is prepared for him. No lodging, no food, no meetings, nothing. He calls his lieutenant and asks what happened. His lieutenant says, "I came to help them, and they wouldn't listen to me. I told them what you wanted, and I offered to assist them. I assured them I had the authority and resources to accomplish it, but they ignored me. The few times they spoke to me, it was to ask me to do something for them. It wasn't to do what you asked but to do what they wanted." How would the king respond?

The Holy Spirit wasn't sent to assure us lives of comfort and ease. The Spirit doesn't live in us so we can rest comfortably in our easy chairs doing nothing for the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit comes to us, disciples of Jesus, to empower us for a mission that cannot be accomplished apart from his supernatural help.<sup>5</sup>

So, look beyond to the Holy Spirit.

### **Third, Look Beyond what the World Says.**

The first half of verse 20:

*I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice.*<sup>6</sup>

What a contrast between the disciples and the world! The world, along with Satan and his demons, rejoiced at the death of Jesus. The religious leaders went home on Friday night, and their wives asked, "How was your day?" and they were giddy that Jesus was dead. They went to their Sabbath services and thanked God that the false teacher from Nazareth had been crucified.

Meanwhile, the disciples wept. Peter especially wept. He started on Thursday night after he'd denied Jesus three times, then when John returned Friday night with confirmation that Jesus was dead, he wept even more. He had failed his Master.

But that was not the whole story. Jesus would rise again, and the disciples would see Him and rejoice.

The world's values are often the opposite of God's values.

Luke 16:15 says:

*What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God.*<sup>7</sup>

Going against what the world says and does can cause Christians to feel like misfits. But even if life is difficult now, one day we will rejoice. Keep your eye on the future and on God's promises!<sup>8</sup>

### **Finally, Look Beyond Your Sorrow.**

Verse 20b and beyond:

*You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus in John 16:7-15

<sup>6</sup> John 16:20a (NLT2)

<sup>7</sup> Luke 16:15b (NLT2)

<sup>8</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>9</sup> John 16:20b-22 (NLT2)

Jesus was telling them what would happen. He was going to die, but when He was resurrected, they would experience joy that could not be taken away. That Easter Sunday would be incredible.

Christianity promises joy on the other side of sorrow, whether it is in this life or the next. The Psalmist wrote:

*Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.*<sup>10</sup>

When I do a funeral, and when we are at the grave, I share these words from 1 Corinthians 15:

*"Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. Then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, o death, is your sting?' But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*<sup>11</sup>

Just as the disciples would experience joy after their sorrow, so shall we. Whatever happens in this world cannot compare to the wonders of the glories of heaven

A group of armed guerrillas made an appointment with Pastor Manuel and his family. He thought they were going to authorize him to have an official church, which he had previously discussed with them. One of them went into the house with the pastor's wife, Gloria, and his daughter while the pastor was outside. He was shot five times. The guerrilla who was in the house with the rest of the family yelled, "Make sure that dog stays dead," referring to the pastor. The guerrillas then shot the pastor again, this time in the neck. Following the shooting, Pastor Manuel's wife ran outside and cleaned his face. With the help of her children, she dragged his body under a tree. She ran and got her Bible and, shaking with tears, preached to all those who came near. Her ten-year-old son said, "Mum, don't worry, dad died for Christ and now he is with Christ."<sup>12</sup>

I know my mom and dad are in heaven right now. I know that one day, I will see them and be glad. But more than that, I will see Jesus, Who will once again stretch out His hands for me. But this time, it will not be on a cross, but to embrace me and say those words I long to hear:

*Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!*<sup>13</sup>

Are you sure that you too will rejoice in heaven? Are you able to look beyond?

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<sup>10</sup> Psalm 30:5 (NLT2)

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:51, 53, 54b-55, 57 (New Revised Standard Version)

<sup>12</sup> Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus in John 16:20

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 25:23 (NLT2)