

# SORROW TO JOY

APRIL 8<sup>th</sup> | *READ JOHN 16:16-33*

Chapters 14-17 of John's gospel are known as The Farewell Discourse. These teachings of Jesus are given to eleven of his disciples, Judas Iscariot has left the upper room and headed out to betray Christ. In our passage Jesus is talking about how there will come a time when the disciples will not be able to see Jesus for he will be in the tomb. He plainly tells them that while he is away, they will have sorrow. But there will come a time when they will see him again and their terrible grief will turn into a joy that cannot be taken away! Jesus uses the illustration of a woman going through labor and delivery to make his point. Jesus goes on to tell them, very plainly, that they will have tribulation in the world. Yet, they are to take heart for he has overcome the world.

Having wrestled with the truly hard reality of our complicity in the cross of Jesus, when we read this text our hearts gladden. Jesus is preparing his disciples ahead of time for the hard times that they will encounter. He tells them plainly that they will have trouble. No sugar-coating the truth. No false ideas about a utopian situation where the disciples are heralded and revered. No beating around the bush in regards to having the favor of the world. They WILL have trouble! But that trouble will not defeat them. Trouble will not overwhelm or overcome them. Rather, in Christ they too will overcome the world. What encouragement this must have been for the disciples on such a night laden with betrayal and hatred. Jesus tells them of the coming Spirit of God who will be their guide into all truth. He tells of their coming victory over the world. He will go on to pray for them where they will hear of their security in him, their being set apart in the truth, and their mission in the world. It is indeed a glorious time for these disciples on the cusp of great sorrow.

Jesus knew what you and I would face in his absence too. In fact, Jesus prays for us! He asks of his Father that the blessings directed at the disciples would be ours as well (John 17:20). Jesus knows that we too will have a sorrow that will turn to joy. He knows that in this world we will have trouble. He also exhorts us to take heart, for he has overcome the world! Friend, I don't know if you are having a difficult time or a time of great blessing. But this I do know, it will change. When it does, remember these words of Jesus and rejoice. Christ knew what you would experience. Christ knows your present situation. Christ will be with you through any future situation. Praise him!

Take time to thank God for his indescribable gift of Jesus.

In Christ,

John