"Jesus' Final Teaching"
November 1, 2026
John 16:16-33

I. Introduction

It was around 2 am Friday morning and Jesus' disciples were uneasy—baffled might be a better word. Judas had left on some kind of mission hours ago and he still wasn't back. The Passover meal and all its activities were done, but Jesus was talking as if there were no tomorrow. The disciples were so tired that it was hard to concentrate on what Jesus was saying, but they were trying. From the bits and pieces, they did understand, they were confused, sorrowful, and afraid. All they really knew was, something big was going to happen but they just couldn't get a handle on it.

In the last 12 hours, Jesus had washed their feet; He had predicted that one of them was going to betray Him. Several times Jesus had said that He was going away and that they couldn't come with Him. And, when Peter said that he would follow no matter what, Jesus had told him that he was going to deny Jesus 3 times before the sun came up. Then, Jesus had said that He was going back to the Father and that when He did, He would send the Holy Spirit—whatever that meant. He had compared His relationship with the disciples to that of vines and branches. Several times He had told them to sacrificially love one another—while the world would hate them and try to kill them.

Because of His agape love for His disciples, Jesus selflessly spent much of this final night with them teaching them and comforting them in their sorrow and their confusion. Actually, they should have been comforting Him as He faced the ordeal of the cross, now only a matter of hours away. They should also have been glad for Him, since He was returning to His place of glory at the Father's right hand. Instead, looking at the events from their own self-centered perspective, the disciples were overwhelmed with grief and a sense of impending loss and doom. In today's Scripture we see the closing comments in Jesus' final teaching. It began with Jesus' prediction.

II. Jesus' Prediction

Jesus' prediction, **"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me"** left His disciples more than a little confused. It has also left interpreters more than a little confused.

For some, the first **"little while"** when Jesus wasn't going to be seen was His time on the cross and the 3 days that followed when He was in the tomb. The second **"little while"** then pointed to the time following His resurrection. Obviously, the disciples would be overjoyed and comforted to see Him alive again. But there is a small problem with this, Jesus was only with them for 40 days after His resurrection and then He left them again when He ascended to heaven. The disciples' grief would turn to joy, and then back into grief again as Jesus left them again. This is hardly the permanent joy Jesus promised them in verse 22.

A second view is that the "little while's" have to do with the coming of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost. After His resurrection and the following 40 days on earth **"when,** as 1 Cor. 5:5-6 says**, He appeared to Peter and then to the twelve and then to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time,"** Jesus ascended to heaven. In this 2nd view, this was the time He was not seen by His disciples. After a **"little while"** (i.e., the 10 days between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost), the Holy Spirit came to dwell in all disciples. Jesus Christ returned to the disciples through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who Paul called **"the Spirit of Christ"** in Romans 8:9. Jesus' presence with His children through the Holy Spirit is permanent—in Matt. 28:20 He promised**, "Surely I am with you always."** Then, as Jesus said in verse 22, **"No one will take away your joy."** This seems to be the better of several interpretations. Jesus would go away and a short time later the Holy Spirit would come.

III. The Disciples' Confusion

After Jesus' prediction, the disciples were confused. They didn't have our hindsight. Unlike Lazarus' sister, Mary, they still hadn't grasped the fact that Jesus was about to die. His words about a **"little while"** left them totally baffled. If Jesus was going to set up the Messianic kingdom why go away to the Father? If He didn't want to set it up, why return? What was a disciple to think?

With His omniscient insight into the hearts of men, Jesus knew that the disciples wanted to question Him. He knew that they were confused. Taking the initiative, Jesus moved to comfort His disciples and patiently explained how they could have joy in the midst of all they were going through. As Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 65:24**, "Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear."** In His final words, Jesus gave His disciples 3 characteristics of this coming joy.

IV. Three Characteristics of Joy

A. Sorrow will be transformed into joy. Jesus used the analogy of a woman giving birth to demonstrate His first principle: *Sorrow will be transformed into joy.* A woman in labor experiences birth pains—every minute may seem like an hour. Yet after the woman gives birth to the child, the pain fades as the joy of holding her child fills her heart. God doesn't substitute something else to relieve the mother's pain. Instead, He uses what is there already and transforms the pain and sorrow into joy.

In a similar way, the disciples would have grief for a short term—their Teacher, Jesus was going away. But in a short time, He would see them again. The reality **"that no one will take away your joy"** indicates that more than just seeing Jesus after the resurrection was in mind, since that lasted only 40 days. Jesus was talking about the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost to permanently indwell them and all believers. Then their sorrow would be transformed into an everlasting joy, part of the fruit of the Spirit—Galatians 5:22-23 says, **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law."**

B. There is joy in prayer. The second aspect of this coming joy is seen in John 16:24, **"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."** There is joy in prayer—in answered prayer.

In verse 23 Jesus had said, **"In that day you will no longer ask me anything."** Jesus was going away but He wasn't abandoning them, **"Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."** The disciples would not need to ask Jesus any questions or requests. Instead, they would pray directly to the Father and He would meet their needs. **"The Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God,"** so God the Father would hear their requests and would meet their needs. When Jesus was on the earth, He met the needs of His disciples. Now He would return to the Father, and the Father would meet their needs. This is a wonderful promise found in the privilege of prayer: **"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."** There is joy in prayer.

Although they didn't know it, there was also going to be a new situation in praying. Jesus would return to heaven to be with the Father, and there He would minister as High Priest and Advocate making intercession for believers. Turn to Hebrews 4:14-16. Jesus will intercede for believers.

Jesus went on to say that in the days ahead, He would speak to them plainly and reveal the Father to them. In those days, the many images that He had used to teach them during the past 3 years would become clearer and clearer as the disciples would be reminded and taught by the Spirit of God. The disciples would even understand Jesus' symbolism. Once again Jesus said, **"In that day you will ask in my name;"** that is, prayers needed to be made consistent with Christ's will, recognizing one's dependence on Him to supply every need, with the goal that He and the Father be glorified. Jesus said earlier in John 14:13, **"I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son of man may bring glory to the Father."** Turn to James 4:1-3. There is joy in praying in Jesus' name and in receiving answers to prayer. There is joy in prayer.

C. Finally, there is the 3rd characteristic of joy: **In Jesus there is peace and joy.** In John 16:29-30, the disciples finally seemed to get it, they said**, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."** The "light of understanding" may have been dim, they still didn't understand the need for Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, but the disciples recognized Jesus' omniscience and therefore His deity.

Knowing their hearts, Jesus answered them, **"Do you now believe?"** The disciples' faith was real, but it was immature. The sad reality was that in only a few hours they would all forsake Him and scatter, **"each to his own home"** and they would abandon Jesus in His time of need. But He would not be alone, **"for my Father is with me."** But after the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, those scared disciples would courageously proclaim the truth about Jesus Christ in spite of fierce opposition and their eventual martyred deaths. The Holy Spirit gives believers courage.

John 16:33 is the summary of Jesus' message and His final words to His disciples before His arrest, **"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.**

But take heart i.e., be joyful! **I have overcome the world."** Jesus gave this message so that His disciples might have peace in the days, weeks, and years ahead. In the midst of trials and tribulations, believers can enjoy heavenly peace. God is in control. In Jesus Christ there is peace; in the world there is trouble. Believers can take heart; believers can be joyful, because of Jesus' victory over the world. In Jesus there is peace and joy—on the earth and on into eternity.

V. Conclusion

Jesus' words of comfort are for us today as well as for His Apostles back then. God can and does transform sorrow into joy. God can take seemingly impossible situations, add the miracle of His grace, and transform trials into triumph and sorrow into joy. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 23:5, **"The Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you."** And what He did for the Israelites He can do for believers today.

But this principle will not work in our lives unless we believe His promise and pray. God has ordained that His work be accomplished through believing prayer. Reading the Book of Acts, one sees that the early church depended on prayer. They believed the promises of God and asked God for what they needed. As James 4:2 says**, "You do not have, because you do not ask God."** In Jesus Christ, we have all the resources that we need. **"In me"** is the key. In ourselves, we have nothing; but **"in Christ"** we have all that we need to have peace and joy.

Every believer either overcomes or is overcome. 1 John 5:4 says, **"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."** But if we take our eyes of Jesus, we, like Peter when he walked on water, will be overcome. The world wants to overcome us; this is why Satan uses the world to persecute and pressure believers. The world wants us to conform; they say in so many ways, *"It is not wise to be different."* But when we yield ourselves to Christ and trust Him, He enables us to be overcomers. We must claim our spiritual position in Christ and trust Him for victory. In Mark 9:23 Jesus said, **"Everything is possible for him who believes."** With Jesus there is peace and joy—now and forever—only believe.

Communion Devotion – November 2026
1 Corinthians 11:23- 30

As we come to the Lord's Table this morning, we are reminded once again of God's amazing love for us. This table and the things on it remind us that the Word of God, the Creator of all things, Jesus the Christ came to the earth and willingly gave His body, His life for each one of us. The Lord's Table, Communion, the Eucharist is a celebration of God's gift of eternal life for everyone who has made Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior. If you have made this decision, if Jesus is your Lord and Savior, whether or not you are a member of TBC, we invite you to join us in this memorial, this celebration, this time to say "Thank You" to God.

The broken pieces of Matzos remind us of Jesus' body that was broken—brutally nailed to a cross—as a sacrifice for our sins. The juice reminds of Jesus' blood that came from the crown of thorns pressed on His head, from the holes of the nails forced through His hands and His feet, and from the gash in His side from the spear that pierced His heart. Gruesome as it may be, it was necessary—Hebrews 9:22 says, **"The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."** It's Jesus' blood that covers our sin. It's because of Jesus' death and resurrection that we can have eternal life. However, if you haven't accepted God's gift, then these elements are of no significance—they aren't going to save you. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-9 that **"it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."** Salvation, eternal life is a gift—as Paul told the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:31, **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."**

As we come to the Lord's Table—as we come to commune with God—we need to look at our hearts and make sure we are right with God—that we have confessed our sin to God. This isn't just some part of a ritual, it is important. Paul wrote that because some hadn't taken care of sin issues, **"many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have died."** In Matthew 5:23-24 Jesus said, **"If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."** Unconfessed sin comes between God and you.

This morning as the elements are being passed, thank God for the gift of eternal life. But don't stop there, look at your heart. Confess your sins to God; make sure you are clean on the inside as well as on the outside.