



# Calvary of Albuquerque

When Sorrow Turns to Joy - John 16:16-22

From the Series, Believe:879

By Skip Heitzig

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

The flamboyant baseball-legend-turned-preacher Billy Sunday stated, "If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere!" That's not to say that life is all laughs. Hardly! Jesus anticipated His followers' deep sorrow. He predicted it. But He also assured them that their experience of sadness would be eclipsed by a greater experience of lasting joy.

## OUTLINE

- I. Confusion Can Challenge Joy (vv. 16-18)
  - A. The Disciples' Misunderstanding
  - B. The Disciples' Means of Handling It
- II. Promises Can Anchor Joy (vv. 19-20)
  - A. Concerning Their Reunion
  - B. Concerning Their Joy
- III. Sorrow Can Lead to Joy (vv. 21-22)
  - A. Delivery is Overshadowed by Maternity
  - B. Despondency Will be Overshadowed by Ecstasy



Answer These Questions:

1. What was the happiest experience of your life? How long did it last?
2. What things make you the saddest? What is the reason? What helps during those times?
3. When confused about some biblical truth, what do you do about it?

## DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
  - A. There are people like the characters from *Winnie the Pooh* in the church
    1. "Some people think it's difficult to be a Christian and to laugh, but I think it's the other way around. God writes a lot of comedy—it's just that He has so many bad actors." Garrison Keillor, *Christianity Today*, 3 October 1986
    2. Nothing more attractive than a Christian with authentic joy: it's infectious
    3. Pessimistic Christians are poor advertisements for the gospel
  - B. Theme: how sorrow is turned into joy
  - C. Jesus presents many contrasts recorded by John
    1. Death/life
    2. Light/darkness

3. Disciples/world
  4. Temporary joy/permanent joy
  5. Pregnancy/live birth
  6. Sorrow/joy
- D. Horatio Spafford (lawyer)
1. Family died at sea
  2. Wrote *It Is Well with My Soul*
  3. "When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul."

## II. Confusion Can Challenge Joy (vv. 16-18)

### A. The Disciples' Misunderstanding

1. Those closest to Jesus still get confused
2. Representation of the apostles
  - a. Art community portrayal: older, wise men
  - b. Biblical portrait of apostles:
    - i. When Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem fulfilling Zechariah 9:9: "His disciples did not understand these things at first;" (John 12:16)
    - ii. "'And where I go you know, and the way you know.' Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?'" (John 14:4-5)
    - iii. After transfiguration: "Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant." (Mark 9:9-10)
    - iv. "But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him." (Mark 9:32)
    - v. "And His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.'" (Matthew 13:36)
3. When we know and understand there is confidence
4. When expectations are unmet, confusion mitigates joy
  - a. Disciples: He loves us, but He's leaving
  - b. Disciples: He talks about His kingdom, but says He is going to die
  - c. Us: The Bible says God loves me, but circumstances don't look that way to me

### B. The Disciples' Means of Handling It

1. Talked it out
  - a. Not afraid to discuss
  - b. Not too proud to admit confusion
2. Some are too proud; they never get answers
3. Some are too busy; they never grow to maturity
4. "*He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who does not ask a question remains a fool forever*"  
-- Chinese proverb

## III. Promises Can Anchor Joy (vv. 19-20)

### A. Concerning Their Reunion

### B. Concerning Their Joy

### C. Promises are more important than explanations

1. When someone faces the death of a loved one, offer promises, not explanations. (*Comforting the Bereaved*, by Warren and David Wiersbe)
2. We don't need reasons, we need resources'

### D. A little while

1. Jesus used this phrase 8 times
2. Meaning
  - a. Immediately
    - i. Upon the resurrection
    - ii. "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." (John 20:20)
  - b. Imminently
    - i. When the Holy Spirit was sent in and upon them
    - ii. "And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 13:52)
  - c. Ultimately: Future: eschatologically when all the believers are gathered in His presence
3. Relative term: Jesus used it differently at different times
  - a. One day: "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also." (John 14:19)
  - b. One year: "I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me." (John 7:33)

4. "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8)
  5. If all of history were condensed to 50 years: 5 months ago, the printing press invented; 20 days ago, electricity discovered; 19 days ago telephone invented; 18 days ago, the first airplane; 10 days ago the first radio; 5 days ago the first television; 5 minutes ago, the first jet;
  - E. We can endure the present trial when we know it will end
- IV. Sorrow Can Lead to Joy (vv. 21-22)
- A. Delivery is Overshadowed by Maternity
  - B. Despondency Will be Overshadowed by Ecstasy
  - C. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse. All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us. (Romans 8:18-23 NLT)
  - D. What the world does when sorrowful
    1. Drink
    2. Drugs
    3. Entertainment (35% combat depression by watching TV)
  - E. What we should do when sorrowful
    1. Replace your thoughts with His truth
      - a. "We must talk to ourselves instead of allowing ourselves to talk to us... most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself...You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself." (Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd Jones)
      - b. "Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," (2 Corinthians 10:5)
    2. Replace yourself with your God
      - a. Not focused inwardly or self-absorbed
      - b. "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)
    3. Replace your past with His future: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4)

**Publications Referenced:** *Winnie the Pooh*, by A.A. Milne; *Christianity Today*, Garrison Keillor, 3 October 1986; *It Is Well with My Soul*, Horatio Spafford; *Comforting the Bereaved*, by Warren and David Wiersbe

**Figures Referenced:** Billy Sunday; Carol Burnett; David Martyn Lloyd Jones

**Cross References:** Job 1:21; Matthew 13:36; Mark 9:32; Mark 9:9-10; John 7:33; John 12:16; John 14:4-5; John 14:19; John 20:20; Acts 13:52; Romans 8:18-23; 2 Corinthians 10:5; 2 Peter 3:8; Revelation 21:4