

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

JOHN 16:19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall

shew you plainly of the Father.

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

NOTES

Peace and Trouble

Lesson Text: John 16:19-33

Related Scriptures: Romans 8:31-39; II Corinthians 4:7-12;
Ephesians 2:11-18; I Peter 1:3-9; I John 4:4-6

TIME: A.D. 30

PLACE: Jerusalem

GOLDEN TEXT—“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Lesson Exposition

SORROW AND JOY—John 16:19-22

A burning question (John 16:19-20). As Jesus continued the final teaching session with His disciples, He issued a puzzling statement: “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father” (vs. 16). As our lesson text begins, the disciples are feverishly discussing among themselves what He meant by it. They were confounded and just dying to ask Him about it, but none of them wanted to be the first one to speak up.

Knowing their dilemma, Jesus took the initiative and asked the question for them, offering at the same time to provide the answer. He was, of course, speaking about His impending death by crucifixion and His subsequent resurrection on the third day.

Jesus was telling them that after He was crucified and entombed, He would be hidden from them for a short time. Then, on the third day after his crucifixion, He would rise from the dead and appear to them again in a glorified body. His intent in telling them this was to provide comfort to them in

the midst of their impending grief and dismay over witnessing His torture and death on the cross.

Within the next few hours, the disciples were going to “weep and lament” (vs. 20) as Jesus was arrested, tried, crucified, and entombed.

While the disciples grieved and wept over their Master’s death, the world would rejoice and celebrate. The religious and civil authorities had long sought to be rid of Jesus, considering Him both a dangerous heretic and a political subversive. But within three days, the disciples’ sorrow would be turned into joy when they realized for themselves that Jesus had risen from the grave, proving that He was both Lord and Saviour of the world.

From anguish to elation (John 16:21-22). To help the disciples better understand these things, Jesus compared what they would soon undergo to the anguish and eventual joy of a woman giving birth to a child. Just as she endures what seems an unrelenting struggle filled with fear, pain, and exhaustion, so it would be for the disciples. They would

soon undergo the grief, doubts, and emotional anguish of having all their hopes and dreams apparently dashed to pieces by the death of their Lord.

But when a woman's baby is delivered at last, all her agony is eclipsed by the joy she feels at the presence of a new human life. So it would be for the disciples. They would rejoice in the realization of their Lord's resurrection from the dead and in His vindication as the King of kings and the Saviour of the world.

PRAYER IN JESUS' NAME— John 16:23-28

Promise of answered prayer (John 16:23-24). "That day" refers to the day of Jesus' resurrection and His reappearance among the disciples in His glorified human form. On that day, a new arrangement would commence in terms of their supplications and requests. No longer would they need Jesus to be personally present among them to bring requests to. After His resurrection, the way would be made wide open for them to boldly ask God the Father Himself for anything they needed. They would ask in Jesus' name, and the Father would graciously provide.

Jesus assured the disciples that although they had not yet asked anything in His name, they would soon be able to do so with full confidence of receiving from the Father. Indeed, this is true for all believers.

Prior to this time, as noted, the disciples had not been encouraged to make their requests to God in Jesus' name. But that was about to change. The purpose of such praying was to make full their joy in the Lord. Of course, the joy comes not so much from the things received as from the close relationship with the Father that results from answered prayer.

Direct access to the Father (John 16:25-27). Up to this time, much of Jesus' teaching had been given through parables, proverbs, allegories, or some other less direct form of speech (cf. Mark 4:34). The word translated "proverbs" here appears four times in John's Gospel (10:6; 16:25[twice], 29) and only once elsewhere (II Pet. 2:22). It is variously translated as "proverb," "parable," or "allegory." Such figurative language may have accounted for some of the lack of clear understanding among His disciples. Jesus may have had to veil some things in figurative speech because the disciples' spiritual immaturity made plain truth hard to bear.

The time was coming, however, when the Saviour would speak plainly to His apostles. This would come after His resurrection over a period of forty days prior to His ascension. The coming of the Holy Spirit would also enable them to understand teachings they had already received from Him.

They would be able to approach the Father in Jesus' name, and Jesus would also pray to the Father on their behalf. Jesus may also have had in mind His own high priestly prayer, which is the subject of next week's lesson.

The apostles were loved by the Father because they believed that Jesus had come from God. Previously, Simon Peter had confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). This was the genuine belief of all the apostles except Judas Iscariot.

Jesus with the Father (John 16:28). Jesus expanded on His statement about the disciples' faith in His divine origin, in the process making clear what He had meant earlier (vs. 19). He had come into the world, having come forth from God the Father in heaven. And now it was almost time for Him to leave the world and return again to where He

had always been, in heaven with God the Father. But with the disciples' newly granted access to the Father in heaven, in a real sense Jesus would still always be with them (cf. Matt. 28:20).

COMFORT IN TRIBULATION— John 16:29-33

A clear understanding (John 16:29-30). Once He had stated His meaning plainly (vs. 28), Jesus' disciples realized that this was what He had been talking about all along, and they acknowledged that they now at last understood Him clearly. This led them to two important conclusions: First, they acknowledged that He knew all things. Second, they acknowledged that He had come from God—He was not a mere man but the very Son of God! Although some of His disciples had indeed confessed Him as the Messiah and Son of God early in His ministry (John 1:40-41, 44-45, 49), their spiritual growth had led them to a fuller realization of what this meant.

A quiet warning (John 16:31-32). When the Lord said, "Do ye now believe?" He was anticipating a time that would soon challenge their faith. At this moment their faith seemed strong, but its strength would be sorely tested in just a few hours.

The hour Christ had alluded to so many times previously had now arrived. During the time Jesus' disciples were with Him, they had experienced a number of trials, but nothing they had faced thus far would compare with what was about to occur. Jesus would be arrested in Gethsemane, and all the disciples would forsake their Master in panic.

A promise of peace (John 16:33). Jesus wanted His disciples to experience peace, but peace of a different kind than the world can ever know. This peace comes only from knowing

Jesus, and it can be experienced by all believers. It is produced in us by the words of Christ. The more we saturate our souls with His words and apply them to our daily lives, the stronger His peace will grow within us.

Jesus was not looking through rose-colored glasses here. He warned His disciples of the unavoidable tribulations of this present world.

But in the face of such inescapable hardship, Jesus bids us be of good cheer. We can have peace and be of good cheer in the midst of the world because Christ, through His sacrificial redemption of sinners, has overcome the world.

—John Alva Owston.

QUESTIONS

1. How did the disciples feel about Jesus' earlier statement, found in John 16:16?
2. What impending events was He alluding to in this statement?
3. How did Jesus illustrate the sorrow and joy the disciples would soon experience?
4. What is the purpose of praying in Jesus' name?
5. Why did Jesus speak in parables and proverbs?
6. Why did the Father especially love Jesus' apostles?
7. What finally led the apostles to clearly understand Jesus' earlier meaning?
8. What event would cause the disciples to forsake Jesus?
9. What special peace does Jesus offer His disciples?
10. Why can believers be of good cheer in the midst of the world's troubles?

—John Alva Owston.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. The Lord is not intimidated by our questions (John 16:19).
2. Regardless of how painful things may be now, pure joy is ahead (vss. 20-22).
3. Asking in the Father's name leads to joy (vss. 23-24).
4. Jesus serves as a liaison between us and God, so we never have to worry about not knowing what to pray (vss. 25-28).
5. We can be confused about many things, but the Word of God is plain regarding everything important (vss. 29-30).
6. Hardships will come, but Jesus has already overcome (vss. 31-33).

—Charity G. Carter.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why would the world rejoice at Jesus' death (John 16:20)?
2. Have you ever allowed or nearly allowed someone to take your joy (vs. 22)?
3. Why might Jesus initially have chosen to speak to His disciples in parables (vs. 25)?
4. How do we respond if what we asked for in Jesus' name is not granted?
5. What tribulation are you currently facing? How does knowing that Christ has already overcome encourage you to keep moving forward (vs. 33)?

—Charity G. Carter.

Golden Text Illuminated

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Human suffering raises questions for both Christians and unbelievers.

Christians can trust God during suffering, regardless of the reason for it. We will always have trouble while we are “in the world.” Not until New Jerusalem descends shall there “be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain” (Rev. 21:4).

But after the reminder that the world will always involve suffering, Jesus states, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” As certain as suffering is in this world, so too is the reality that when Jesus died and rose again, He defeated the powers of sin, hell, death, Satan, racism, legalism, and antinomianism. In short, He overcame the world. Last week we read the assurance that He is preparing a place for us in His Father's house. We have reason to rejoice in our suffering: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Cor. 4:17).

Indeed, Christ's resurrection from the dead is but the beginning. He is “the firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18) and the “firstfruits” of our own resurrection (ICor. 15:19-23). We now await His return, where He will make “our vile body . . . like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21). In the meantime, because He has overcome the world, so too our faith in Him overcomes the world, giving us hope amid our own tribulation.

—David Samuel Gifford.