

Title: A Little While And You Shall Not See Me

Text: John 16:16-33

Would you take your Bibles, please and open them to John chapter 16. There are notes in your bulletin. I would encourage you to use them as we study the subject: A LITTLE WHILE AND YOU SHALL NOT SEE ME.

John chapter 16 beginning with verse 16...(Read Vs 16-33)

(PRAYER)

When the Apostle Paul left a group of men at Mi'let'us, who were Pastors at Ephesus, the Bible says that they all fell on his neck and continued to kiss him and cry, sorrowing most of all that they would see his face no more. And when we can enter into the emotion of that passage, how much more the emotion of this one. When Jesus informed his disciples that they would see him no more. And there sorrow was going to come. But he encouraged them by saying that their sorrow was going to turn into joy.

I remember well leaving my first church where I served as Youth Pastor after close to six wonderful years, and believing that God had called me as a Chaplain into the Army, I remember well the trauma of that moment. And the sorrow that we felt. But how my sorrow was turned into joy as I saw God work in that place.

And perhaps you have had the same experience in your life. Moments of sorrow. And yet God brought more joy than you could ever anticipate or believe. Maybe right now you are experiencing some sorrow in your own life. But I am here to tell you this day that these words of Jesus are eternal. And they can be applied to every life. Your sorrow is going to be turned joy. And ultimately every believer will experience the greatest joy possible that the world has ever ~~been~~ able to touch. And all sorrow will be wiped away. And all tears, and all pain.

So, it is good that we enter into this chapter and try to understand a little bit about what the disciples felt. And what we might have felt if we had been there. And also the wonderful teaching from our Lord about sorrow.

Let's look at several things:

(1) First of all, they had a problem in understanding. Vs. 16 to 19. I want to give you two views about that problem they had in understanding. Not because I am not settled on one of them. But because the commentators and all the Bible teachers of the ages are rather divided over this, as to what Jesus really meant. So, I would like you to see both sides so that you may probably decide for yourself.

The problem they had in understanding is the same as today because then or now people still had a hard time understanding what Jesus meant.

(1) Number one, many believe that Jesus is referring only to his death, resurrection and ascension. Many believe that Jesus is referring only to his death, resurrection and ascension into heaven.

Now, if you would carefully at verses 16-19 you would interpret it in the following way. "A little while and you will no longer behold me." Namely: I am going to die. Which would be the next day if you know the story.

Then the phrase in Vs 16.. "and again a little while, and you will see me." would be interpreted as following the resurrection. Because the last phrase in Vs 17 says "Because I go to the Father." Which would mean his ascension. The disciples were not sure what he meant by "a little while". It seems that their problem centered in on that phrase alone. If you would notice verse 18. It says "What is this that He says, 'A little while?'" I mean how long is he talking about?

The obviously saw hope in what he said because he said, "and again you will see me." But, what is the meaning of "a little while"?

There are those who believe that the "little while" is only referring to the time between the death and the resurrection. That they would then see him again. And then he would ascend into heaven. I have a little difficulty with that. Because that doesn't seem to be so long. As a matter of fact, it is only three days. And it doesn't seem to fit the overall nature of what we have been learning in John up to this point.

(2) Which brings me to the second view which I hold to. And that is that Jesus is referring to his departure from the earth. And that the "little while" is time between His first advent and His second advent. The sorrow and all the period of lamenting in his absence is from the time he left this earth until the time that He is going to come again. ~~His return~~

His return again is the time he is referring to when he says "a little and you shall see me."

Now, let me if I can show you that from the content of John.

Turn back to chapter 12, please. Chapter 12 verses 35 and 36. Because this wasn't the first time that Jesus made this remark, about "a little while and then you will not be seeing me." Vs 35 says, "Jesus therefore said to them, "For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light." The light of course is Jesus. "That darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light."

Now, turn over to chapter 13 verse 1. "Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that..He..should..depart..out..of..this..world..to..the..Father."

That would refer to the ascension. Including the events of the death and resurrection and the forty days following. And then the ascension. Jesus knowing that he was going to depart finally out of this world, he then washed his disciples feet, he then taught them about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So, I believe the departure, the time he is going to leave them is referring to his ascension. And leaving the world. Not simply the three days between the death and the resurrection. I don't believe that makes good sense.

In chapter 14 verse 1-6 I find that He is referring to the second coming. (read Vs 1-3..then refer down to Vs 19)

Vs 19 says "After a little while (same phrase) the world will behold me no more; but you will behold me; because I live, you shall live also." That is still looking to the future. Because He lives, you and I will also live in the future.

Going to chapter 14 verse 28 and 29 (READ)

So, I believe the second of these two views is the correct one.

Now, look at chapter 16 verses 5 and 6. Jesus said, Vs 5, "But now I am going to Him who sent me;" It is the ascension that is the point of departure. "And none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart." The sorrow was over his departure. The departure is referring to the ascension. Not between the time of his death and resurrection. Which would be too short.

So, the folks who believe this is referring to that time between the death and the resurrection, they would feel that after the resurrection they did see him. And that would be the fulfillment. No, I believe that view is limited. That is certainly involved. But it is limited. The view of the passage about Him departing is that He is departing unto the Father. It refers to His ascension. His leaving this world. What will happen to the disciples while Jesus is gone? And that is the reason for all of his teaching on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So, I believe that it is referring to the entire time between the ascension of Jesus and His second coming.

Now, if you believe that the whole passage applies to each and everyone of us, here, today. And that is another reason why I believe in that second view. All of this that Jesus is teaching applies to us. We are part of this passage. But, I want you to know that some folks do not believe this. That is just referring to the death, resurrection, and ascension. But I do not hold that view. And you need to know that as we go through and interpret and apply these verses.

(2) Now, secondly, beginning with Vs 20, let's look at the promises that Jesus gave to His disciples. And there are four major promises that I want to share with you from these wonderful words. These promises would be to you and to me.

(1) One, I want you to look at the promise as to the rejoicing that we are going to experience. Rejoicing. The joy. Verses 20 to 22.

Now, there is a certain amount of sorrow in the hearts of every believer. In I Thess. chapter 4, the church was very concerned about the Christians who had died. Because they were waiting for the second coming. They were taking these words of Jesus quite literally. And they believed that the "little while" was a short time. They had no idea that it would now reach out to 19 hundred years. It is still "a little while" in terms of God's timing. Because our concept of a day may be a thousand years in God's mind.

But, some time had past. And the Christians in the church at Thessolanic were concerned about their loved one's who had died. That is why Paul wrote in Chapter 4: "We do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep" or, those who have died. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." AT WHAT TIME?....

"For the Lord, himself will descend from heaven." That is the second coming. "And the

dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive will be caught up. Therefore, comfort one another with these words."

Why do we need comfort?.....Because we are sorrowing between the time of Christ's departure. WHERE IS HE?.....

And some people, in the last days, will even get to the point according to 2 Peter 3, that having seen this "little while" extended over 19 hundred years, they will now mock and make fun of this doctrine of the second coming and say: "WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING? FOR IT LOOKS TO US LIKE ALL THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY HAVE FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION."

And God says that they are stupid of one thing: And that is in past history all things have not continued. But God brought a universal flood and changed the course of history. And He said that just as He did it then, so will he do it in the future. The Lord is not forgetting concerning his promises. But He is long suffering to us who are believers. Because he is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentence. In other words God is delaying His coming for one reason. That we believers would get the Gospel to every person that God wants to save. He is using believers to do that.

Now, why will we have rejoicing in the midst of sorrow? In the midst of that fact that Jesus is gone and He is not here?

I notice that He gives us an illustration in Vs 21. "A woman when she is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come. But as soon as she delivers the child she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world.. Therefore you, too, now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you."

That is going to happen at the second coming of christ. Now, I believe that His illustration also prove that point. The woman in travail. And example.

Now, turn to Romans chapter 8, please. Romans chapter 8. In speaking about the second coming and the redemption of the physical body. By the way, if you are not physically suffering, cheer up, you will one day. If God delays his coming, we are all going to go through it. But, you know, when a person is suffering there isn't a better message then this one. The whole creation is groaning with pain. Like a woman with child. Paul says so in Romans 8:18. ...(Read Vs 18-25)

You see getting back to Christ's Word. Your sorrow is going to be turned into joy like a woman who has a baby. It is the second coming of Christ that we are dealing with. Paul wrote of this often.

I even think of Revelation chapter 12 verse 2 where a woman travailing in pain is also likened unto the birth of Christ and also His second coming.

The pains of a travailing woman are also mentioned in I Thess chapter 5. In 2 Corinthians 4:17 and 18 it says our light afflictions are for a moment. And it is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Christ was talking about His second coming. And if you have a little sorrow running through your veins this morning, I hope that I can lift your eyes to that great event of the return of Christ. And that you will realize that there is more joy than you could ever dream would be possible in your life, just awaiting you the moment of His return.

All of this sorrow, and all of this suffering will be changed in a moment of time when we see Jesus.

(2) Now, there is a second promise. Not only the rejoicing when we see Jesus, but as it relates to prayer, the request that we can make. As we look at John chapter 16 verse 23 it almost appears that there is a contradiction. Follow this carefully. You may want to make a note in the margin of your Bible.

Vs 23 says.. "And in that day you will ask me no question." Yet the next statements says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father of anything, he will give it to you in My name." "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full."

Now, which is it? Don't ask anything, or, ask anything? Which is it? Well, both! In verse 23 where it says "in that day you will ask me no question" the word "ask" is a different word than the word translated "ask" in the next phrase. The first word "ask" means to ask questions.

Now, if you know the content, you will get the point. They are asking questions concerning how long will he be gone. What do you mean a little while.

In that day...WHAT DAY?..The day of His return. In that day you will not have to ask a thing. Hay! listen, we are going to be there. We are going to see it. We will not need to ask a thing. Why? Because he will be there.

But the next statement, Vs 23, "if you shall ask the Father for anything." That is the word for "petition." Asking the Father in my name. Request. He will give it to you.

In other words, what do we do when Christ leaves? Who are we going to ask for things? Answer: Jesus says that you have the privilege of prayer all the time I am gone. A wonderful privilage that you can hardly believe. Wait untill I tell you. Here it is. Ask the Father in my name, and He will do it.

Now, to emphaize the point, Jesus says in Vs 24.."Until now y ou have asked for nothing in My name." You think you have, but you really haven't. You can ask me..(the word is continually)..and you will continually receive. AND DO YOU KNOW WHY?.. Because I have already told you that I want you to have joy.

Well, I am going to tell you now, to have joy in the mist of sorrow. And that is through prayer. You joy will be full. Literaly.."having been filled."

You will walk around durning he time of my departure will all the suffering of life, you will walk around as a believer with this wonderful joy.

AND DO YOU KNOW WHY? Because you have discovered that you have direct communication . You have a direct line to the President of the company. And anything you want you just call Him up and ask Him. If it is His will, he will do it. WHAT A TREMENDOUS PROMISE THAT HE GIVES TO US IN THE LIGHT OF HIS DEPARTURE.

Now, I believe that there are three things being taught here about this wonderful promise of prayer. Three things.

(1) One, the authority of Christ. He says to "ask in my name." And that brings to my mind what he has already said in chapter 14: verses 13 and 14. What ever you ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything, I will do it."

The authority of Christ is a very important matter in prayer. You are asking upon His authority. His name. He said we could do it.

(2) Number two the assurance of answered prayer. If you don/'t believe God answers prayer, why are you praying? The assurance of answered prayer. The Bible says that "my God shall supply all of your needs." He didn't leave us alone. NO WAY! God has given us power in prayer. Ask in my name. The assurance of answered prayer. He said, he will give it to you. You shall receive. Tremendous promise.

(3) The third thing is the abundance oif joy that comes through prayer. If you are not happy, no matter what the testing or what the joy, let"s put our finger on the root of the problem. You are a believer in Christ, the root of the problem is not asking God. You are not praying. You are not taking your burdens to the Lord and leaving them there. You are not believing that God will meet your needs as he has promised. That is why you do not have joy in your life in the midst of sorrow. What a tremendous promise.

(3) Third promise. This involves the revelation that they would receive. They really didn't understand all that He was saying. Jesus says in Vs 25" "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language". Meaning .. proverbs or little truths or little illustrations that reveal things. But, "an hour is coming, when I will speak no more to y ou in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father."

WHAT TIME? Some say, "after the resurrection." No! I don't think so., Because it is"that day" which is under discussion. And: that day refers to the second coming. In that day we will really see plainly.

Vs 26 "In that day you will ask in My name; and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on y our behalf:"

Why? No need to anymore. The Lord is here. He has returned. This is a wonderful promise for the future. All of our lack of understanding, about the eternal God, we are going to receive tremendous information and knowledge in the future. Wonderful

(4) Number four. There is a promise about his return to the Father. Another tremendous promise. Vs 28 says.."I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father. His disciples said, 'Lo, now you are speaking plainly, and are not using a figure of speech.'

You know, I read this passage a dozen times trying to figure out what in the world does it mean. What do you think this means when it says that the disciples now understand. They got it all straight. By His simple statement that he was going to go to his father.

The answer that I believe is the simplest one that convinced the disciples that He was now speaking plainly was that they realized that He came forth from God and that therefore he was dealing with his origin and His nature. And that God has sent Him on this special mission. And he was going back to the Father. And it was all under a plan. So, they put two and two together and said, "OH, we understand that.

Now, I believe that Jesus predicts for us complete understanding in the future. Wonderful. And He who returned to the Father is going to return to this earth. And explain all things. Great.

But, the thing that the disciples did not realize is that in the hour of the crises when Christ went to the cross they wouldn't stay with him. They wouldn't keep strong. They would forsake him. They would leave Him. They didn't realize that. Because they thought: "Hay we understand all of this, now. You are going to go back to the Father. That is great. We have the whole plan down now."

The only thing they didn't understand was the weakness of themselves at the time of the crises when it would hit. Because you see, when Christ died on that cross, the Bible says that not just Judas betrayed Him, not just Peter denied Him, the Bible says that they all "forsook him and fled."

(3) And that brings us to the finally point. The prediction that he made about this whole thing in verses 29-33. Just three simple things here.

(1) One, He predicted the departure of the disciples. They would leave him. Notice his question in Verse 31.. "Jesus answered them, Do you now believe?"

Now, they just said that they did. In Vs 30 they said, "We believe that you came from God."

Vs 31 "Do you now believe?" Well, if you are let me tell you what is going to happen. Vs 32 "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come." The hour of his trail has come.

By the way, people often ask that. The question: If it has already come, and He hadn't died, in what sense had it come?"

Now, we can expand the word "hour" to mean "the total events around that." And. that maybe one answer.

But, remember that Jesus died on passover. That was the hour..that was the time. This discussion was on the same day. You realize that? The same day. They had gathered in the upper room the night before he went to the cross. Now, that passover ...Passover begins at 6:00 in the evening and ends at 6:00 the next evening. And there are two suppers..two saders...Between the two evenings the lamb is sacrificed. You have a dinner the first night. You have a dinner the second night. The second dinner is when the lamb is eaten. So, it was during that particular day, the hour had come for his death, that was true. It was already here. This is the day of passover. It is now her3e. That is exactly what Jesus meant. Because as you know, it was long before He was betrayed. And the prayer in the garden, the trail of that night, the mocking, the scourging, the crucifixion, it all happened in the same day Between 6:00 the night before and 6:00 the night following. He was taken down from the cross and put into the tomb before the next day began which was 6:00 in the evening. All of that happened in that period of time. The hour had come. The day of passover was here. And in fulfillment of prophecy Christ was going to die in that moment.

Well, he predicted their departure. They would scatter..Vs 32.."each to his own home." They all left Christ, But He said "I am not alone."

"I am not alone. The Father is with me."

(2) Now, the second thing about this prediction is the design He had behind these words. What was his motive? What was His design? Why did he say this the way He did?

Vs 33.."These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace." That is why He said it. Listen, dear friends, you will never really have peace until you find it in Jesus Christ. You never will. You will keep running around finding artificial peace. Which means that I am not being troubled by circumstances. Or, as long as everything is going O.K. then I am fine. NO..."IN ME YOU WILL HAVE PEACE." Jesus even tells us that in the world we will have tribulation. And I say "amen" to that. That certainly is true. In the world you have tribulation, you have affliction, you have sorrow, you have testing, you have trial. BUT, ONLY IN JESUS DO YOU HAVE PEACE. No other way. Christ puts balance and harmony into your life. The word "peace" means "to bind together." All things come into place and you are now balanced. You understand. You know what is going on. And there is rest and peace in your heart.

You know that Jesus is coming back. And that is great. That puts peace in your life.

And you know that everything that is happening right now, God is in control. All things are working together for those who love Christ. And that is also peace.

And you know that whatever happens in your life, God has a reason for it. The Bible teaches many, many reasons for the suffering and sorrow that we experience. That also is peace. You get a balance and a sound mind. A mind that understands for God is doing. That is real peace....being bound together.

(3) And third notice the defeat of the world. And Jesus said that it has already been accomplished. The end of Vs 33 Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD."

Not, I am going to..But..I already have...

Now, the question might be: in what sense has Jesus overcome the world?

The Bible does say in I John 5:4.. "that you and i have overcome the world by means of our faith in Jesus Christ."

HOW DID JESUS OVERCOME THE WORLD? We might simply say by dying on the cross. But, he hadn't died yet. And He said, "I have overcome the World."

WHAT IS THE WORLD? That world system?..YES...The world of mankind that is in that system?..YES..That is part of it. The entire structure of everything that is against God and fighting against Him. The tribulations..the testings..the conflicts that he predicted that we would have in the world... All of that is a part of the world. But, in what sense has Jesus already overcome it?

Hay! Who is running the show, dear friends? Who is running the show? God is....From eternity past..the whole structure, everything there is..is under the mighty hand of God.

I have heard preachers stand up and say that everything that is happening is not under the control of God. It is all under the control of Satan. And they seem to be saying that Satan is more powerful than God.

Listen, dear friends, the ability for Satan to do anything was given by God. Everything is under the control of Almighty God. Even that which Satan seem to do. God is working all things after the counsel of His own will. We don't have any reason to be afraid. All the suffering..all the worry... all the things the experience in life is under the control of almighty God. We don't need to be afraid. God has already overcome the whole thing. It is all finished.

Your faith in Him means that you have overcome it also. It cannot overcome you. No way! And one day our sorrow is going to be turned into joy like a woman waiting for a baby to be born. When it is born..the Lord comes...man we are going to forget the testings. HAY! won't that be great?

You are just going to forget all the troubles of life. All those pains that you have right now sitting there in the pew wishing that it would quite. All of these things.....Every bite of them

Listen, I can't help but get excited when I go into a hospital and some dear soul is there suffering and I have the joy of sharing something about the second coming of Christ. Man! do you know what happens?.....

Hay! those people get excited. It is great. It is wonderful. Little smile comes over their face. We don't sorrow like the world sorrows

Now, listen, if you don't know my Jesus, and you don't know that if He would come right now, you would be on your way to heaven with him, man I feel sorry for you. I would get that straightened out today before I left this service. I would know that Jesus is my Lord and Saviour. That I am going to see him face to face. No matter what we have gone through our sorrow is going to be turned into joy. God will wipe away ever tear from your eyes. And there will be no more pain nor sorrow no more death.

LET'S CLOSE IN PRAYER.