

Pastor Ben Libby  
 Sermon  
 5/22/2019

To Jesus Christ, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification, be glory forever Amen.

The Word of the Lord which forms a portion for our sermon text this morning comes to us from Gospel of John, chapter 16, starting at verse 16:

John 16:16-22 <sup>16</sup> " A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father." <sup>17</sup> Then some of His disciples said among themselves, "What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" <sup>18</sup> They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is saying." <sup>19</sup> Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'?" <sup>20</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. <sup>21</sup> "A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup> "Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

This is the Word of God. Congregation may be seated.

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and from your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed...

Today is Mother's Day. While this is not an official religious holiday, we as Christians can certainly take it to have spiritual implications. After all, having a Godly, Christian mother is extremely important to becoming a Godly Christian. It is our mothers who love and care for us since the first day we come into this world. It is our Mothers who sacrifice for us and nurture us. If you can't rely on a mother and her love, life is probably going to be very difficult for you...

If someone important to you told you that they were going away, just for a little while, but they would be back, how long would it take you to worry about them or grow suspicious that they weren't coming back? For most of us, for most of our lives as

youths, there is always mom. This is certainly a blessing, but we can take her for granted in a lot of times also. We might take for granted that our moms love us, and we might get complacent with their care and love. As a personal example, I like most likely a lot of you had my mom at home for most of my young years. I certainly took this for granted. As a child, whenever I needed something, I would blindly call out "MOM?!" I didn't always know where she was in the house, and for the most part I lazily didn't care. When I wouldn't get a response back, that's when I would figure out that she was out of the house... But I always knew that she would come back eventually. (Love you mom.)

I think that we learn this from a young age. When my wife goes out of the house, and I am left to watch the boys, sometimes my son forgets where mom went. He'll ask where mom is, and I will remind him that she just went out for groceries. He may have even said goodbye, but his mother is such a constant in his life, that it puzzles him when he hasn't seen her in even 5 minutes. He may even get sad when I tell him where she is, but I can always reassure him that, "It's OK, Mom will be back soon."

In our sermon text today, Jesus made a similar promise to His disciples. They had gotten so used to their Master always being around, they might have expected Him to stay with them for a very long time. But Jesus had some tough news for them: He was going to be going soon. They couldn't really understand what exactly He was talking about. This puzzled them. What did He mean? Well, Jesus would address what He meant and what the emotional reactions would be as well. He would leave them, for a while, and they would be sad. But they shouldn't be afraid or sad, because He was most defiantly coming back. We can expect the same thing as Christians. Our Savior is not here, but He is coming back. This means that we will have sorrow for a little while, but that sorrow will result in joy eternally! And so, we pray **MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDIATIONS OF OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT O LORD, OUR MAKER AND REDEEMER, AMEN.**

**<sup>16</sup> " A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father."**

To really understand what Jesus was saying, we need to see the context into which He said it. This was said on Maundy Thursday evening, and the disciples were gathered with their Master in the upper room. Our text is a small part of a much larger sermon that Jesus spoke to them. Basically, He is saying goodbye here. But, as per usual, much of what

He was saying was going over the heads of these men. These words in particular baffled them. What was this departure to which He was referring? While these men were confused about what He was talking about, little did they know how dramatic the events He was hinting at were, or how they would change all of their lives in just a few short days...

When it came to the disciples, both back then and with us here today, no one knew them better than their master Jesus. He could tell that they were not picking up what He was putting down. <sup>19</sup> **Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'?"**

So much of our human lives and existence is based on conversations. We make reactions to things that we hear. This is how we relay information with each other. Because of technology, there are many ways in which we are able to communicate and exchange information with each other. But perhaps the best way is the oldest and simplest way. There really is no better way to exchange information than a simple conversation. You could send someone a letter, but then they wouldn't be able to hear your voice and the inflection in it to be able to tell what you really are saying. You can give someone a phone call, but they will not be able to see your facial expressions or non-verbal communication ticks. You can send information quickly and fire off a text message, but you really cannot get the conversational tone of what the intended message is with such a message. It can be hard to pick up on basic things like sarcasm or empathy when there is no sight to sight connection.

But no matter what, as a speaker, you really do not get to choose which words you say get remembered or get taken to heart. You can be persuasive, you can speak elegantly, you can even list statistics and facts. But, at the end of the day, it is on the listener to listen and remember what you said.

This can be frustrating. We brought up Mother's Day. How many times have our Mothers said something that was important to us that simply went in one ear and out the other? How many times during your young years did your Mother tell you to do something and you just didn't do it? There would be many more clean rooms if children's ears were always attentive and obedient...

What Jesus was saying here was important. Even though the disciples were struggling with this, it was important that they not only hear what He was saying, but that they remember latter that He said this. This was Maundy Thursday. The very next day, Jesus would go to the cross to die and pay for the sins of the world. This would cause His disciples deep sorrow. But He would not be gone forever. He would only be gone for "a little while". He would return, and that is exactly what He did. On Easter Sunday, He would rise triumphantly from the grave.

But the disciples would struggle significantly with both of these events. They would not be able to handle the grief that would go hand in hand with His death. But they also wouldn't be able to process the joy that would come in the resurrection. Yet they should've expected both of these things. Multiple times Jesus told them that these things would happen. By Jesus telling the disciples the things that would happen before they did, not only did He give them a silver lining and a foreshadowing of things to come, but He also demonstrates that He was truly in charge of these upcoming events.

And Jesus does not sugar coat it. The disciples would soon experience real sorrow. This message of Jesus had a smaller and larger context to it. He would leave in the form of His death and be gone a little while. Then He would return in His resurrection. But then after that, He would also leave in the form of His ascension. He is gone now for a little while. But He is going to return. We are still waiting for that, but as surely as He did return on Easter morning, so too shall He return in triumph on the last day...

When Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples would truly experience the temporary sorrow to which He was referring. Not long after that, Peter and John would be thrown into prison for preaching Christ in Jerusalem. When the rulers found out that these followers were not going to stop preaching about this Jesus Christ, the punishments would get more severe. The disciples would be beaten in public, thrown into jail multiple times, even die for this message of Christ crucified.

We are not free from this sorrow either. In our country, we have religious freedom to follow and worship Christ. But, this does not mean that we won't be looked down on for doing so. We hopefully will not die for our beliefs, but persecution will still happen to us. It may be more subtle, but being a Christian is looked as foolishness. We are seen as backwards and simpletons for following the Word of God. By insisting that God's Word is truth, the world is offended by our views that Jesus is the one and only way to heaven. They will hate you if you love Jesus. This is part of the temporary sorrow that He was referring to here.

But this sorrow is only going to last for a little while. To drive this point home to His disciples, Jesus uses an example that all people could understand. <sup>21</sup> **"A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup> "Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.**

On this Mother's Day, it is important to recognize our own Mothers. Why? Because, bluntly, it is painful to be a Mother! Jesus brings up the pain of Childbirth here. If this is something you have been through personally, then you know firsthand just how painful it is to bring children into this world. I am told, that as a man, it is a pain that I cannot even

begin to fathom or understand. I must admit, I am thankful that I did not have to experience that pain. As a Father, the only pain I experienced at the birth of my children was the pain of seeing my wife suffer with her labor. It was not pleasant, but my pain was nothing compared to hers, which she will remind me of...

But the pain does not stop there! It's not easy to be a good mom. Most often, it is the mother who is asked to sacrifice her career in order to raise children. In a recent survey, it was estimated that a stay at home mother is worth an annual 6 figure salary. So all encompassing and demanding is the job of being a mom, that if they were to get fully compensated, they would make over \$160,000 a year! And then, there is the burden of actually raising children. It is a thankless job, and one that needs to be recognized more than just on Mother's Day!

But, most Mom's would tell you that it was worth it. Why? Because they love you! It's that simple. Mother's sacrifice their bodies, their careers, and their lives for their children. They do it because they love their children! Why would anyone go through the pain of childbirth? Because there is no joy comparable to holding that newborn infant in your arms. Like Jesus points out, **as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.**

Jesus brings up this example for a reason. What's His point? The pain does not last forever. It is just for "a little while". Labor pains pass, and the lasting effect is that a child is born. So too will the labor pains of this world pass away. Right now, it may seem like it never will. We often toil away in this vale of tears. There are many things here that cause us grief. But, it is worth it! Jesus said, **John 16:33** <sup>33</sup> **"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

Jesus did overcome the world. He did so by going to the cross to pay for the sins of the world. That includes you, and it includes me. Why would anyone go through the pains of labor? A better question is why would Jesus go to the cross? He was not getting anything out of it, all He got was suffering the pains of hell itself on the cross. He did not deserve that; He was perfect and holy. But yet, He was willing to do it any way. Why would Jesus put Himself through that? It is the same reason someone would go through labor, LOVE! But whereas a mother suffers to bring her child into the world, Jesus suffered for the whole world so that we might have a future outside of this world!

**Isaiah 49:15** <sup>15</sup> **"Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.**

It is true, nothing can compare to the love of a mother. But moms are humans too. They make mistakes, they are not perfect, as both mothers and children can tell you. But Jesus was! Nothing compares to the love of a mother, expect for the love of the Savior! He suffered greatly so that we will live forever with Him in heaven.

So, how long is a little while? A little while seems long to us, but the days we spend on this earth cannot compare to eternity! It is true, Jesus is not here right now, at least not in a way that we can see Him with our eyes. And it is true, we do suffer in this vale of tears with the consequences of our sins all the time. But it is only for a little while. Our lives are more than just our experiences and conversations here on earth. We have a future with Jesus in heaven to look forward to! He is going to return!

In the meantime, we get separated. Some of our loved ones are not here anymore. We all will be separated from our loved ones at some point in time. It may seem like a long time to us, but it truly isn't. It's only for a little while. We will have eternal, everlasting joy with our Savior forever! There is nothing that we can experience in this world, not

even the birth of children, that will compare to the joy that we will experience with our Savior in heaven! Jesus said **"Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.** This is true. It was true for the disciples, and it is true for us, Christ's disciples today. Jesus will return, and when He does, we will experience everlasting joy. That joy does not last for just a little while, rather it will last forever! All praise and thanks be to our Savior Jesus Christ, who went through unspeakable pain to provide us with joy which no one will ever be able to take away from us! AMEN!!!