

## THE PHYSICAL RESURRECTION OF JESUS AND OUR UNQUENCHABLE JOY

Easter Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 10:00 a.m. - Teaching #1962

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**John 16:20-22** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. [21] When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. [22] So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."

**"No one will take your joy from you."** Do you see those words at the end of verse 22? They are not the words of Oprah Winfrey. They are the words of Jesus Christ. Through His resurrection from the dead He was going to bestow **unquenchable** joy - **irrevocable** joy - the kind of joy that couldn't be **eclipsed** by anyone else or anything else - nor **removed** by any sorrow or trial.

This is an incredibly huge promise. Imagine if you could truly make your friends and neighbors consider the possibility of joy that was constant and unremovable - that they could have a joy that was 100% guaranteed and unending - that they could live the rest of their lives, regardless of whatever else happened - and never be without ultimate joy for one second. Most would think this offer was a pipe-dream. Perhaps some of you sitting here today think so too.

I can't help but think our world is skeptical about irrevocable joy. We live in a world filled with **pleasure**. In fact, the frantic pursuit of pleasure and things only bears testimony to the absence of true joy. We try to fill up the empty space in our lives. And I suppose there are many short-sighted people who confuse **fleeting pleasure** with **irrevocable joy**, but that is a terrible and deadly mistake. There are pleasures of wealth and pleasures of health and pleasures of sports and body and mind. But all of these only last while the supply of wealth is secure, the body is strong, and the mind is alert.

So when we hear these words from Jesus they almost seem too good to be true - like a warranty that looks good on the box, but you know will never turn out as good as it reads. **"No one will take your joy from you!"** How can such a massive claim be true? Is there good reason to cling to it? How can this possibly work in the real world? This is the subject of our teaching this Easter Sunday morning.

First let's be careful about setting the stage for these wonderful words. As far as the **"real world"** goes, Jesus uttered these words one night before His execution. So the promise of joy was made with a full awareness of the grittiness of life in the real world. Strangely, with these words, Jesus was trying to brace, not Himself, but His disciples, for what they were going to go through. That's why He speaks the words of **verse 16** - **"A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me."**

The disciples are confused by these words and they discuss what Jesus might have meant in **verses 17-18**. Jesus sees they are confused and tries again to explain in **verse 20** - **"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy."**

He means that He is going to be taken from them when He is killed and they will mourn and lament. Then He will rise from the dead and they will be filled with great joy, joy that will be **irrevocable (22)**. In other words, the joy they have **right now** with Jesus physically present, **isn't** irrevocable. We know this because Jesus **tells** them they are going to lose this joy when He is killed. But there is a specific **kind** of joy that will only be possible **after** His resurrection from the dead. They will experience this **irrevocable** joy **after** they see Jesus again **after** His resurrection.

To make His meaning more clear, Jesus uses the illustration of the birth of a child in **verse 21** - **"When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world."**

There is a world of difference between the way a woman feels on the delivery table and the way she feels in the maternity ward with her new baby in her arms. This is the best picture Jesus can come up with to tell His disciples the change of heart they are going to experience as they go through the agony and darkness and loss of Jesus' presence as He is taken from them and killed on the cross, and the joy they will experience when they see Him again after His resurrection. But, just like the birth of a child (especially in Jesus' day), there is no way to get to the joy of the presence of the baby without the agonizing process of travail and labor.

But, and this is the important point, once Jesus has risen from the dead, His disciples will be indwelt, not only by **greater** joy in measure - like a liter of joy is more than a milliliter - but a different **kind** of joy altogether - joy of a different **order** and

*nature.*

And then Jesus tells them **how** this joy will be different. Earthly joys **fade**. All of them. Treasures don't last. Bodies grow old. Loved ones and friends die and leave us - just as Jesus would be leaving His disciples when He died on the cross. But after Jesus' resurrection from the dead their joy will be different because resurrection joy **lasts**. Jesus says it **"cannot be taken from you"**(22).

All of this leads up to the key question that must be dealt with as Jesus makes His landmark statement in **verse 22** - **"So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."** All other joys will fade. This joy will not. And the obvious question is **"Why not? - Why can't this joy be taken from them - and us?"** What is so special, so extraordinary about **this** joy - resurrection joy - that Jesus can make such an unconditional guarantee? I think there are **two answers** from the New Testament:

- 1) **"NO ONE CAN TAKE THIS JOY FROM YOU".... BECAUSE YOUR JOY COMES FROM BEING WITH JESUS, AND JESUS, BEING RISEN AND ALIVE FOR EVERMORE, WILL NEVER BE CUT OFF FROM YOU AGAIN**

Jesus makes very clear the **source** of the disciples' future joy - **"I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice"**(22). In other words, their joy comes from being with Jesus. This text offers no hope for secure joy to people who do not enjoy being with Jesus Christ.

If Jesus says to your heart this morning, **"I will see you again,"** and your heart does not respond to that with rejoicing, then this text is not a **promise** to you. It is an **invitation** to you. You are still in the dark about knowing the living Jesus. You need to come and discover that knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the greatest source of joy and meaning that can be had.

Remember, if your ultimate joy in this life **isn't** knowing Jesus Christ, even if you are a very religious, church going person, then you have no **secure** joy in this world. I would urge everyone this morning to seriously and honestly examine the ultimate source of your joy. Is your ultimate source of joy your wealth? Is it your success? Is it the bottom line of your business that spins the wheels of joy and purpose and meaning? Is it sports or travel or leisure? Is it your friends? Is it your wife or husband? Is it your children? Is it your house and your cottage? Is it sexual fulfillment?

Jesus wants to address any flimsy foundation of joy this morning. All of these things can be taken from us so quickly. One bad report from a doctor will knock the legs out from under any false foundation of joy. One recession can set you on your back financially. Loved ones get sick and die.

And if just **hearing** about this is depressing it only **shows** how **dependant** we are on these things for our joy. Jesus says our joy must be rooted **in Him and His presence**. Only knowing the Risen Jesus can bring **irrevocable** joy. Why? Because He has now been raised from the dead and will never be cut off from His people again. He is not going to be crucified ever again. He is not on the cross. He has defeated death forever.

So when Jesus says He is the source of **irrevocable** joy He is saying, **"I am your joy. And I will never die again. So the source of your joy is unending and eternal."**

But there is another issue that we must consider. There is a second reason Jesus can give **irrevocable** joy:

- 2) **"NO ONE CAN TAKE THIS JOY FROM YOU".... BECAUSE YOUR JOY COMES FROM BEING WITH JESUS, AND THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS MEANS THAT YOU WILL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND YOU WILL NEVER BE CUT OFF FROM HIM**

These two truths are **similar**, but not exactly the **same**. First, Jesus as the **source** of joy will never be cut off from you. Second, you will live forever to **experience** joy, and never be cut off from Him.

You see, **two** things have to be true if we are to have eternal joy in Jesus Christ. First, the **source** of our joy must last forever. That's Jesus Christ, God the Son. He has conquered death and is now alive forevermore. But, second, **we** must last forever. If either our **source** of joy or our **living, conscious experience** of joy - if either one doesn't last forever - then our joy will be taken from us. If our joy is to be irrevocable then both our **source** of joy and our **experience** of joy must be eternal.

O how we settle for temporary joy! You've all heard the saying, **"Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."**

**Food** doesn't last forever, and **fun** doesn't last forever, because **I** don't last forever. Joy is fleeting and insecure. Grab as much as you can and make the most of it that you can. We only have a brief, fleeting shot at joy.

What a tragic way to view life, and what a tragic way to have joy! If you are tempted to think that way this morning let me lift your sights with these magnificent words of Jesus: **"No one will take your joy from you!" First, because Jesus lives and will never die again. And second, because, through faith in Jesus Christ, you can have eternal life and joy that never diminishes.**

Look at the way Jesus repeated this great truth on another occasion:

**John 14:18-19 - "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. [19] Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live."**

**"Because I live, you will live also."** Not only will Jesus live forever as the **source** of our joy, but **we, His followers**, will live forever to **consciously experience** this joy forever. There are no other offers like this. This is why Christianity is unique among the world's religions. This is the **distinctive glory and greatness** of the Christian gospel.

We **know** these words and probably **agree** with these words but we can't really **feel the impact of them**. You and I can't even imagine anything we can keep forever. We cannot easily get our minds around anything that will not be taken from us. Our possessions. Our family. The breath in our lungs. The sight in our eyes. The beating of our own heart. Nothing is really **ours** as a possession for very long. Everything **ends**. Everything **quits**.

Then Jesus comes. He passes through the dark night of the cross for your sins and mine. His disciples mourn and are confused. They experience that anguish of the labor before the birth. But Jesus comes back to them again, risen, and alive forevermore - **"I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you."**

History has borne it out. We have the words of these same disciples, long after Jesus had ascended into heaven. They faced great hardship, pain, loss, and even death. What about their joy? Did the promise of Jesus ring true for them in the real world?

You be the judge: **Romans 8:35-39 - "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.'**[37] **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

Again, we have a hard time relating to those words. We know they're true. We respect them as inspired Scripture. But they have an unreal ring to them. We don't know how to seriously read, **"For your sake we are being killed all the day long"** (36). Most of us don't even remember really bad toothaches. But these disciples knew the grit of those words - **"...killed all the day long."** Virtually every one of them was executed for the Name of Jesus. That is, they were all **killed**. They didn't just **die** like most of us.

**But their joy didn't die. Their joy couldn't be killed along with their bodies.** They are the proof of Jesus' promise. Joy still pounds in their hearts in the presence of Jesus! Don't read these words lightly. Don't read them religiously. Embrace the full weight and power of them this glowing Easter Sunday morning! Because you and I have the same promise. We are promised what only our Risen Lord can give. We have **unquenchable joy** in Jesus Christ!

So it is something very precious that I am describing this morning. Do you live life with **fear**, or do you live life with **joy**? That is the Easter question. The Resurrection of Jesus from the grave isn't just a doctrine. It can be the most life-changing, heart-renewing, joy-pounding event in your experience right now. It puts an **eternal foundation** under your life - one that outlasts your last breath on earth.

Find satisfaction and forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus Christ. There is nothing else like it in this world. It is not available through anyone else but the Risen Christ Jesus of Easter. I commend Jesus to you this morning. I commend eternal, irrevocable, unquenchable joy.