

JOY IN PLACE OF SORROW

NO. 2525

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“And you now, therefore, have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you.”
John 16:22.

JOY is the normal condition of a Believer. His proper state, his healthy state, is that of happiness and gladness. As I have often reminded you, it has become a Christian duty for Believers to be glad. “Rejoice in the Lord,” is a precept given to us over and over again and I believe that, broadly speaking, the general condition of God’s people is one of joy. It is not a falsehood if we say, “Happy are you, O Israel!” True Christians are the happiest people under Heaven. They have many sorrows, but there is a text which says, “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” And old Master Brooks has a good note upon the passage. He says that it does not say, “As sorrowful, yet *as* always rejoicing.” The “*quasi*”—the “*as*”—relates only to the *sorrow*. The joy is real, without any “*quasi*.” Christians have *quasi* sorrow, but they have *real* rejoicing! They are oftentimes as if they were sad—yes, as if they were, of all men, most miserable, but in the very depths of their soul they have “the peace of God which passes all understanding,” to keep their heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

I will venture to assert that Christians, at least, always have matter for joy. They are never short of material out of which they may make melody unto the Lord! If they will, they may rejoice, for they have plenty of causes for joy. The Lord has done great things for them and they ought to add, “Therefore we are glad.” And, as they have plenty of matter for joy, so they have ample motive for joy, for when they joy and rejoice, they glorify God, they prove the reality of their faith and they make their religion attractive to others!

The joy of the Lord is their strength, their beauty, their charm. There are always reasons why a Christian should be happy and as he has matter for joy and motive for joy, so he always has a measure of joy! He may seem to be overwhelmed with trouble, but his boat still floats. He may seem to run short of joy, as the widow in Elijah’s day ran short of meal and oil, but there shall always be a cake for him to eat and a little oil shall still remain in the cruse. His joy shall never utterly fail him—he shall always have a sufficient measure of hope to enable him to keep his lamp alight in the darkest night.

Above and beyond all this, the Christian always has a remainder of joy which shall be his in due time. What he has not yet in his own hand, is in the pierced hands of Jesus, held there fast and safe against all comers! And he may and he should always sing—

*“Glory to You for all the Grace
 I have not yet tasted.”*

Some people have but little in possession at present, but they have a reversionary interest in a large estate. And it is so with us. We have a heritage of joy that as yet we have not entered upon, but it is ours by a covenant of salt, and none can break the sacred inheritance. So let us again take up the language of the hymn we sang at the beginning of the service—

*“The hill of Zion yields
 A thousand sacred sweets,
 Before we reach the heavenly fields,
 Or walk the golden streets.”*

Thus you see, dear Friends, that Believers have matter for joy, motive for joy, a measure of joy already possessed and a greater remainder of joy yet to be realized! God's people are a happy people, a blessed people. May my soul always be numbered among them!

Now, coming to the text, which is intended to promote our joy, I gather two observations—first, that the Lord Jesus *enters into our sorrows*. He does not overlook them, but He says, “You now, therefore, have sorrow.” Secondly, *the Lord Jesus creates our joy*. “But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you.”

I. First, then, dear Friends, you who are sorrowful, listen to this former part of the discourse. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ENTERS INTO OUR SORROWS.

One point in which He enters into them is this—He *sees our quickness in sorrowing*. Perhaps you did not notice that in the text, but it is there. You observe, in the 20th verse, that Jesus said to His disciples, “You shall be sorrowful,” and He compared them to a woman in travail. But then He did not say what we might have thought He would have said, “You *will*, therefore, have sorrow,” but He said, “You *now*, therefore, have sorrow.” He saw their faces begin to pale before the sorrow had really come. He had not gone away from them, for there He stood in their midst—but in the expectation that He would go, their eyes began to grow dim and the tears commenced to roll down their cheeks, so He said as He looked at them, “You now, therefore, have sorrow.” And, Beloved, you and I also are very quick at this work of sorrowing. I wish that we anticipated our joys with half the readiness that we anticipate our sorrows! We would be much happier if we did, but there is many a child of God who cries long before he is hurt and sorrows long before his troubles actually come to him.

We often run to meet our troubles—we seem as if we were hungry to have our mouth full of bitterness and eager to drink the waters of Marah. It is a pity that it should be so with us. These disciples had not yet lost their Master—He was still with them and a child-like spirit might have said, “Ah, well, blessed Master, if You are only going to be with us five minutes, we may as well be happy for that five minutes! If You are going away in half-an-hour, at any rate You are here as yet. Let us not begin to be cast down until the parting moment really comes.” “Ah!” you say, “but it was very natural that they should begin to sorrow.” Yes, and that is exactly what I say. It is very natural, it is so wonderfully natural that it is pretty nearly *universal* with us! But it is not any the better for being natural, is it? You take your medicine when the proper time comes for taking it, but do not be taking it all day long! There are many Christian people who chew their pills instead of swallowing them. If they took their sorrows when they came and accepted them as having been sent straight from God, there would not be half the bitterness in their mouths that there now is when they begin to think concerning some future trial, “Oh, it is coming! I know it is coming! I can see that it is coming!” The shadow of the sorrow is often worse than the sorrow, itself, and as Young speaks of him who “feels a thousand deaths in fearing one,” so I doubt not that we often feel a thousand sorrows in anticipating one. They will come soon enough, Brothers and Sisters—do not go to meet them! Go forth to meet the *Bridegroom*, but there cannot be any particular need to meet your *troubles*. Let them come when they must come—and welcome them—but why should you conjure up those which, perhaps, have no existence at all?

Notice, next, that our Lord has a very quick eye to observe our *sorrows which relate to Himself*. He says, “You now, therefore, have sorrow.” That is, “*sorrow* because I am going away from you. Sorrow because I am about to die.” I think that the Lord loves His people to have that kind of sorrow. While the Bridegroom is with the children of the bride chamber, it is fit and comely that they should rejoice. But when the Bridegroom is gone, it is loyalty to Him and it is a fit and comely thing that they should sorrow. Now, Brothers and Sisters, whenever your heart gets heavy because you have lost your Lord's company, it is a proper sorrow. Whenever you hear His name blasphemed, whenever you find false doctrine preached instead of the Truth, whenever you see men undermining the blessed Gospel, when you notice apostates turning this way and that and forsaking the paths of Christ, you *should* sorrow. And, if you do, I believe that your Lord looks upon such sorrow as a token of your loyal affection to Him and, so far from condemning it, He justifies it and He says, “You now, therefore, have sorrow.” He looks at the reason for it and He says, “This is not a causeless grief.”

He did not blame the disciples for sorrowing when He was gone. No, He expected that they would do so and He saw the reason for their grief and spoke tenderly of it. If there can be found a reason for the sorrow of a child of God, Christ will find it. I know that, often, worldlings are unable to understand our sorrow. They say, “Why does this man fret and worry? He has everything that heart can wish.” But the Savior knows the secrets of the soul and He puts His finger on the

source of our grief and says, “You now, therefore, have sorrow.” And if that, “therefore,” is because of something touching Himself and His Kingdom, and His work in the world, He justifies the sorrow and He will help us to bear it and, in due time, He will remove it! Let us, then, bless our Lord Jesus Christ that while He knows how quick we are to sorrow before we need to, yet He does approve of our sorrowing when there is a need for it and specially when it concerns His own dear Self.

Observe, further, that our blessed Master is quick to notice *the limit of our sorrow*. Take your pencil, if you will, and put a black mark under that third word in our text, “And you now, therefore, have sorrow.” I feel as if I could almost kiss that word, “You now, therefore, have sorrow.” What does that word, “now,” mean? Well, sometimes, it only means just the next few minutes—“You now, therefore, have sorrow.” But, “now,” cannot mean long—if, “you now, therefore, have sorrow,” it does not mean that you will have sorrow forever! Listen—“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” Did you ever read that in the Psalm? Sing it in deep bass tones! Growl it out if you will! “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” Up rises another singer and sends up the soprano note higher than my voice can go—“But the Lord delivers him out of them all!” And that glorious note seems to kill the other. “You now, therefore, have sorrow.”

Ah, but what is that little “now”? It is a mere drop that trembles on my fingertips! It is “an inch of time, a moment’s space.” “You now, therefore, have sorrow.” Perhaps tomorrow morning all that sorrow will be over and if not, that, “now,” is driving away on red-hot axles and will soon be gone! And there shall come the hereafter of endless joy and boundless bliss. Our Lord Jesus Christ recollects this fact when you do not. You say, “I am so sorrowful, so broken down.” And the Savior puts His dear pierced hand on you, and He says, “Yes, you are so *now*, that is all. It is only *now*, and it will all soon be ended. And then you will take your harp down from the willows and sing and rejoice with the happiest and the merriest of the saints of God.”

Notice, also, that the Lord Jesus Christ so enters into our sorrow that *He has an eye to the outcome of it all*. He says to each Believer, “Yes, dear Child, you have sorrow, you have great sorrow, but you know what it is to produce. A woman, when she is in travail, has great sorrow, but in a short time her sorrow is turned into joy when her child is born into the world.” So every sorrow of a child of God is the birth pang of a joy. I do not know whether you have noticed, but I have, that most of our joys, if they are of an earthly kind, are very expensive before long. You cannot delight in the creature without sorrow coming of it. You cannot love your wife, your child with a most lawful and laudable love, but one of these days it will be most expensive love—when the loved ones are taken away, or they sicken and suffer. The more we love them, the more they cost us! But our *sorrows* are fish that come to us with money in their mouths. Whenever they come, they always bring us joy! If you dig round the roots of a deep sorrow, you shall find tubers of joy, with stores of heavenly bliss laid up in them! They who sorrow for Christ shall soon have Christ to make them forget their sorrow. They who sorrow for His Kingdom, or sorrow for more of His righteousness, or sorrow for more of His likeness, or sorrow for closer communion with Him shall, before long, find to the delight of their soul that their sorrow is turned into joy!

Is not that a wonderful promise? “Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” If any man here were greatly in debt and someone were to say, “All your debts shall be transformed into assets,” well, it is clear that then the richest man here would be the man that had the biggest debts! So is it with our sorrows—the more of them that we have, the more joys we shall have, because they are to be turned into joy. If, as Believers, we have much sorrow, we shall have much joy coming out of it! Therefore, with the Apostle, “we glory in tribulations, also,” and triumph in the afflictions and trials of this mortal life, seeing that they shall work our lasting good.

Once more upon this first point, our Lord Jesus Christ sees that our *sorrows will come to an end*, for He says, “You now, therefore, have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.” The Lord knows that His people are not hopelessly locked up in prison, they are not to be eternally in the shade. They shall soon come out of their sorrows and the darkness shall be turned into the brightness of the day. Our Lord can see this and He would have us see it, too, so He points it out to us. O sons and daughters of sorrow, I pray the Comforter to apply this Word with power to your souls!

II. Now I have to play on a higher string. Let me have your most earnest attention while I dwell for a little while on the latter part of our subject—the Lord Jesus creates our joy. He says, in the second half of the text, “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you.”

Observe, first, that when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to make His people glad, He *always touches the very center of their grief*. The disciples’ grief was that Jesus would soon be gone from them. “Well,” He said, “I will see you again.” So, Beloved, when the Lord Jesus shall come to you in your hour of sorrow, He will touch the center of your grief, whatever it is. There is a wonderful adaptation in the Word of God to the peculiarities of all His people. There are some very odd texts in the Bible—do you know why they are there? It is because there are so many odd people about—and those texts are meant specially for them! You may see upon a locksmith’s ring a number of strangely-shaped keys—it is because there are so many strangely-made locks! And in God’s Word there is a key to fit every lock. There is a key for the strange lock that is inside your heart, my Brother or my Sister, and the Lord knows how to meet your case exactly and to touch your out-of-the-way, singular, special, peculiar, idiosyncrasy of sorrow! He can get at it and put it right away from you.

Notice, next, that *the Good Physician makes the plaster wider than the wound*. He says not what we might have thought that He would say, “You will sorrow because you cannot see Me, but you shall see Me again.” That plaster would have just fitted the sore, but He says, “*I will see you again.*” That is a great deal better! That covers the sorrow and covers all the wounds of all God’s people right down to this day, for though we do not see Him again just yet, yet He is still seeing us again as much as ever He saw those disciples when He stood in the midst of them and said, “Peace be unto you.” Oh, I love this Characteristic of my Master that, when He meets a poor Believer who asks Him for a penny, He says, “Here, take seven.” When we knock at His door and say, “A friend, who is on a journey, has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him; lend me three loaves,” He says, “Take as many as you need.” His liberality far outruns our needs and our desires—and He is both able and willing “to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” So that our Lord Jesus Christ creates our joy by touching the very center of our grief and then by covering it with that which is greater than the grief itself!

Note, further, whenever the Lord Jesus Christ comes to one of His sorrowing people to give him joy, He *gives it most effectually*. What does He say to His disciples? “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.” That is more than any mere man could say. When I get to talking with God’s downcast people, I can say to them, “I will see you again and talk with you again, and I shall be glad if I can make your heart rejoice.” But I can never be sure that I shall succeed in cheering them. You and I, dear Friends, are very poor comforters, and we often fail. But when the Good Physician comes to any of His patients, He knows how to make the medicine effectual! “*I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.*” See how the Lord Jesus Christ handles human hearts. This morning we had a grand subject in which we showed how the Lord, in His Omnipotence, by His authority and power, cast out devils with a word. [Sermon #1765, Volume 30, *An Astounding Miracle*—read/download the entire sermon for free at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>] And here we have another instance of His Omnipotence! He does not say, “I will try to cheer your heart.” He says, “Your heart shall rejoice,” just as if He had our hearts in His hand and could do with them as He pleased, which is really the case! His Divine Spirit can now so effectually apply the comforts of the Word that it shall not be said, “You *ought* to rejoice,” but, “You *shall* rejoice.” The Lord can lift up the light of His Countenance upon us till we are glad in Him.

I want you also to notice that while the Lord’s application of joy to the heart is very effectual, it is *very deep and very full*. “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.” When the worldling is glad, you hear him laughing from his teeth outwards! He puts on a merry look, yet all the while there is heaviness in his heart. His wine vats are full to bursting and the sound of the buyer is in his ears, but there is a fear in his conscience and his soul is disquieted. But when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to deal with His people, He deals with their *hearts*, with the inmost core of their being, with the very center of their soul! “Your heart shall rejoice.” Do you not know what this experience is, beloved Brothers and Sisters? I think you do. Sometimes you could not explain your joy, it is too deep—it is so excessive that words and noise of any kind seem quite out of place. You need to get alone and, in the silence of your soul, sit still, like David before the Lord, and there to drink in full draughts of His love. “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.”

True Christians need never covet the poor joy of worldlings. We cannot fall into the insanity of living with such miserable ends and objects as those which are compassed within the short pale of our existence here below. It has become slavery to us and I bear witness for myself and for you, also, that we do not forsake the pleasures of the world because we

think that we are denying ourselves! It is no self-denial to us, for they would not please us. I have gone by a whole line of sties and seen the pigs feeding greedily, but I never thought that I was denying myself because I did not feed with them. I never wished to have a law passed that the unclean beasts should not have their swill. No, let them have it, and as much as they can eat! And we say just the same of the pleasures of the carnal man. We do not envy him that which is so great a relish, it is no self-denial to us to go without it—we have come out of that style of living and we do not want to go back to it. When the man says that he is perfectly happy and satisfied, we think, “Just so, no doubt you are, and we have seen many a fat bullock in the field look perfectly content.” But Christians have different pleasures and higher joys! And we cannot be bullocks, we cannot be swine. We have been brought out of that kind of merely animal life! We have been lifted up into another and a higher style of living and it is nothing short of a miracle of the Divine hand which has brought us right out of it, so that we have done with it forever, and loathe it, and could not go back to it under any circumstances whatever! Old things are passed away! Behold, all things are become new. The Lord has brought us out of the region of darkness into His marvelous light and delivered us forever from the power and dominion of Satan!

I saw, the other day, a blind fish that had been accustomed to live in a dark cave. It had not any eyes and it did not *need* any eyes because it lived where light never came. There are some people who are just like that fish—they are perfectly satisfied to be blind and, what is more—there are some blind persons who declare that there is no such thing as light, for they say that they never saw it! Just so—they have not any eyes with which to see it. The carnal mind cannot understand the things of God. There is not the faculty in it by which it can understand them. The carnal mind has not the Spirit of God! Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned and until God, the Holy Spirit, comes and creates in us the eye-faculty called the spirit, by which we become body, soul, and spirit, we are like the blind fish which has no eyes. We are just mere men, but not men of God. We have not passed into the new world of spiritual perceptions. But, by the Grace of God, many of us have been made partakers of the Divine Nature and so have been permitted to share the joy of which our text speaks.

But I must get to the end of my discourse by reminding you that the glory of the Christian’s joy lies in the fact that it is *permanent*. “Your joy no man takes from you.” “Well,” says one, “I wonder what that joy is?” Let me tell you and then I will close. The sorrow about which Christ spoke to His disciples was that He was going away from them. Therefore the joy of which He spoke is that now He sees us again! I want you, dear Friends, specially to notice, as I have already told you, that it does not say that *you* see Him, but that *He* sees you and, therefore, to you, Peter’s words may be applied, “Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet, believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

What, then, is our joy? It is, first, that Christ is not dead. He is alive, He is risen from the dead! Next, He reigns as well as lives, and He reigns for us—He is ruling all things on our behalf and, as He sees us with His royal eyes, He also pleads for us before the eternal Throne of God! And He is coming again! We know not when, but we know that He is coming quickly and that He is already on the road. He shall descend in like manner as they saw Him go up into Heaven.

All this is the joy of the Christian which no man takes from him! No man shall ever take from me the joy that Christ rose from the dead! I know that He did—there is no historical fact that is so certainly attested as this, that Christ died, was buried and, on the third day, rose again from the dead! And therein I do rejoice, yes, and will rejoice! If He rose not from the dead, then my preaching is vain and your faith is also vain—but as He surely rose from the dead, then every trouble has gone. I do not think that those poor disciples had any joy while Christ was in the grave. They could not rejoice then. Their big sorrow swallowed up all joy. And I do not think that if you and I were what we ought to be, we should have any sorrow, now that Christ is out of the grave—the joy because He has risen ought to swallow up every sorrow that we have—it should be a joy that no man can take from us!

There is this further joy that no man can take from me, that Jesus Christ reigns, King of kings and Lord of lords! I have often told you how, many years ago, that doctrine saved my reason. And I am alive and here to preach because of that glorious Truth of God. After the terrible tragedy in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, my mind seemed to fail me, and my reason reeled. I had to get away and be alone. And so I walked about a friend’s garden. Someone watched me, for they did not know what might happen to me—I was so unmanned that I did not seem able to pray or to read the Scriptures. But as I was walking in the garden, there came to me this passage, “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.” And I said to myself, “I am a poor soldier, wounded in the battle, and lying

in the ditch. But there rides the King and all is well with Him, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords!” I seemed to rouse myself up out of the ditch and cry, “Hallelujah be to His blessed name!” and in that moment all my faculties returned to me! I walked into the house, and said, “I am perfectly well. I can preach next Sunday.” And I did preach, the following Sabbath, from the text that had been so blessed to my own heart and mind. [Sermon #101, Volume 2, *The Exaltation of Christ*—read/download the entire sermon for free at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>] What matters it what becomes of me? Whether I live or whether I die, no man can take this joy from me, that Jesus Christ lives, reigns, triumphs and that He shall surely come to judge the quick and the dead according to my Gospel!

I preach to you, Beloved, a joy that no man takes from you! If you begin to live by your own feelings, you will sometimes be up and sometimes down, and be always unsettled. Now live on this Truth of God—first, that Jesus died. Then if you believe on Him, you died in Him. Next, that He was buried and that your sins were buried with Him. Then, that He rose again and you rose in Him—and now that He lives and reigns forever and ever, your cause is safe in His hands and apart from your cause altogether, your spirit may rejoice that the cause of right, the cause of truth, the cause of God, is secure beyond all hazard because He who went away from us for a little while, though we have not seen Him, yet sees us, and our hearts do and will rejoice in Him! Blessed be His holy name!

I wish that all of you shared in this joy, but those who do not believe in Jesus cannot. Dear young people, I have a great longing that very early in life you should be reconciled to God by the death of His Son. It is such a joy to know the Lord early that I cannot understand why so many wish to put it off. There is a young man who wants to be married and he wrote to me to ask whether, on a certain day, I could marry him. I could not, for I could not be here, so I proposed to him to wait a week till I came back. Instead of which, he proposed that it should be a week *earlier*, as he said, to accommodate *me*! I notice that there is no wish to put off a wedding and I do not wonder that it is so, but I do marvel that, in the far higher joy of being married to Christ, the greater and truer delight of becoming one with Him forever, so many want it to be a week later, or a month later, or even a year later!

Oh, did you know that happy day when Jesus puts our sins away—if there were a time fixed and you knew it—I think you would grow almost impatient to have it even earlier! Do not postpone this heavenly marriage, I pray you, who have been at enmity against God! Do not put off being reconciled to Him, for he who fights with God had better quickly end the battle! So be silent and end all your discussions with God without a word unless it is such a word as this, “Lord, I believe! Help You my unbelief!” God grant that you may be led to believe in Jesus *now*, for His name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

JOHN 16:16-33.

Our Lord is speaking to His disciples before His departure from them to be crucified, and He says.

Verse 16. *A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father.* It is wonderful how He could talk thus calmly about His death, knowing that it would be a death of bitter shame and terrible agony. Yet He does, as it were, pass over that view of it as He says, “A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me.”—“Because I die?” No. “Because I am crucified?” No, but, “Because I go to the Father.” Beloved, always think of your departure out of the world in the same light—“I go to the Father.” Do not say, “I die. I languish upon the bed of pain. I expire.” No, but, “I go to the Father.”

17, 18. *Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He says unto us, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He says, A little while? We cannot tell what He says.* Then why not ask Him? But are not you and I often very slow to ask the meaning of the Master’s Words? You read in Scripture something that you cannot understand, and you say to yourself, “I cannot make out the meaning of that chapter.” But do you always pray over it and ask the Writer to tell you what He intended when He wrote it? It is a grand thing to have this Inspired Book. But it is a grander thing, still, to have the Spirit of God, who inspired it, abiding with His people forever! But we fail to learn many a secret from the Word because we do not pray our way into it. He who does not know can scarcely have his ignorance pitied when it remains willful. If you can know for the asking, why not ask?

19. *Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do you inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me?* They might have inquired a long while among themselves and all in vain! But to go to their Lord was the short way out of the difficulty, for He could explain it. See how ready He is to explain, for He expounds the Truth even to those who had not asked for an exposition! In this matter, He was found of them that sought Him not. Knowing that they were desirous to ask, He accepted the will for the deed, the wish for the prayer—and He answered the secret longing of their heart.

20. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, That you shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.* “I am going away from you, and while I am gone, it will be all weeping and lamenting with you, but while I am gone the world shall have its hour of triumph—it shall think that I am slain and that My cause is defeated.”

20, 21. *And you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail has sorrow because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.* So, when Christ came back again, they would remember no more the sorrow of their travail hour in which they saw Him bound, spat upon and taken off to execution—and mocked upon the tree. The joy that would come of it all would obliterate the remembrance of the sorrow!

22, 23. *And you now, therefore, have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you. And in that day you shall ask Me nothing.* “You shall not need to make, anymore, inquiries of Me, for everything shall then be explained to you by the Spirit.”

23. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you.* “This shall be one fruit of My passion, that, henceforth, whatever you shall ask of the Father, in My name, shall be given to you; and though you may not, perhaps, address your prayers to Me personally, yet addressed to the Father, in My name, they shall succeed.”

24. *Hitherto have you asked nothing in My name.* “You have not yet learned how to use My name in prayer.” Our Lord had not yet taught them so to pray, but now we know what it is to ask in the name of Christ—it is to pray with the authority of the risen and glorified Son of God!

24. *Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.* See how our Lord continues to drive at that point, for He would have His people happy. He wants you, Beloved, to be joy-full—full of joy! Not merely to have a little joy hidden away in a corner somewhere, but, “that your joy may be full.”

25, 26. *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time comes when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day you shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.* Though that is, indeed, what our Lord does!

27. *For the Father Himself loves you.* “The Father, whom you are so apt to think of as sterner than Myself, and further off than I, the Son of Man am, ‘the Father Himself loves you.’”

27. *Because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.* Have you, dear Friends, love to Christ? Do you believe that Christ came forth from God? Then does the Father give His special love to you!

28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.* Had He not clearly explained what He meant by being absent a little while, and then coming back again?

29, 30. *His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speak You plainly, and speak no proverb. Now are we sure.* Now they can give reasons for the hope that is in them. “Now are we sure.”

30. *That You know all things, and need not that any man should ask You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.* They are very positive, but notice the check that our Lord put upon all this confident assurance!

31, 32. *Jesus answered them, Do you now believe? Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone.* Whenever there is any boasting upon your lips, even though you may think that you can rightly say, “Now we are sure,” stop a bit, dear Friends, stop a bit! We have not, any of us, all the good we think we have. No, they who think themselves perfect think the most amiss. They are altogether mistaken and there is some latent unbelief even where faith is strongest. Christ still asks, “Do you now believe?” You have only to be sufficiently tried and to be tempted long enough—and in that very point where you think you are strongest you will fail. “Now are we sure,” say the confident disciples. “Ah,” says Christ, “do you now believe? Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone!”

32. *And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.* How gloriously is that blessed Truth of God put in just here! The awful solitude that Christ was about to pass through can hardly be understood by us. It was not only that every friend forsook Him, but that there was not, under Heaven, a single person who could sympathize with Him. He was going through deeps that no other could ever fathom. He was to bear grief which no other could ever bear! You may, indeed, sip of His cup, but you can never drink it to its dregs as He did! You may be baptized with His baptism; but into the depths of the abyss of woe into which He was immersed, you cannot go. “Alone! Alone!” Never was there a human being so much alone as was the Man, Christ Jesus, in that dread hour! And yet He says, “I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” O brave Master, make us also brave! May we be willing to stand alone for Your sake, and to feel that we are never so little alone as when we are alone with You!

33. *These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace.* Your Lord wants you to have peace. Come, then, you tried ones, you who are tossed about with a thousand troublous thoughts—it is Your Master’s wish and will that you should have peace!

33. *In the world you shall have tribulation.* You have found that true, have you not? Perhaps you are finding it true just now. “In the world you shall have tribulation.”

33. *But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* And in that overcoming He has conquered for you, also, and He guarantees to you the victory in His name!

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