

## **John 16:16-33**

What had started out to be a traditional Passover ceremony had turned out to be a most unusual evening.

First of all, from the remnants of the meal, Jesus instituted a lasting memorial, which, along with baptism, would become the two ordinances of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Then, He slowly redirected His disciples' expectations away from the kingdom.

On the positive side, He fortified them with His promise of peace, and His personal friendship.

It would be a friendship that would bring unimaginable blessing, but it would also expose them to persecution.

John 16:2 **"They shall put you out of the  
synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that  
whosoever killeth you will think that  
he doeth God service."**

But I think the most devastating news as far  
as the disciples were concerned was His  
announcement that He would be leaving.

But He wasn't going to leave them  
comfortless.

No, in answer to His prayer, the Holy Spirit  
would come to be their teacher and  
their guide.

And He would also open up their  
understanding of all things concerning  
Christ --- **"he shall take of mine, and  
shall shew it unto you."**

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Well, all of this was quite wonderful, but  
it was also quite new.

It was a lot to take in in a relatively short time.

No, I wouldn't be surprised if they were quite spent both mentally and emotionally.

Jesus knew that, and He also knew what He must tell them now would be quite upsetting.

I think that's why He opened up the subject with a proverb.

Yes, He would start them off gently.

John 16:16 **"A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."**

The key words here are, **"A little while."**

That means Jesus was talking about the immediate future.

And it would be a most tumultuous future.

He would ease them into the subject with a proverb.

However, it wouldn't be long, before He could speak more plainly.

V 16 **"A little while, and ye shall not see me."**

The word "**see,**" as it is used here, is in the usual sense of seeing with your eyes.

That was their present situation.

Jesus was right there, but in a "**little while**" He would be leaving.

In fact, He would be violently taken away from them on that very night.

Then Jesus said, "**and again, a little while, and ye shall see me."**

Although it's not indicated in our English translation, the second time Jesus said the word "**see,**" He was using a

different word than the one He had just used.

This time the word had nothing to do with vision, but rather comprehension, like when we say, *I see what you mean*.

For 3-1/2 years, the disciples had slowly and progressively understood more and more about their Master.

And in "**a little while**" after His resurrection, and for the next 40 days, there would be a few more lights coming on.

And certainly, after the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit became their teacher and guide, the whole picture would open up before them.

Also, down through Church history, as men studied the Word of God, the Holy Spirit has continued to glorify Christ.

Yes, the Rose of Sharon will unfold before  
our wondering eyes, and someday we will  
see Him **"face to face."**

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Let's return to that little company as they  
walked to the Garden of Gethsemane.

By this time, the disciples were tired, and  
I'm sure they were quite frazzled.

Jesus was using a proverb, but they didn't  
get it, and they were too tired to  
concentrate.

They could have asked Him what He meant, but  
instead, they began to inquire amongst  
themselves.

V 17-18 **"--- What is this that he saith unto  
us, A little while, and ye shall not  
see me: and again, a little while, and  
ye shall see me: and, Because I go to  
the Father?**

**18: They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith."**

Yes, they were murmuring amongst themselves, and there might have been a touch of irritation in their voices --- *Do you understand what the Master is saying? I certainly don't.*

In just a few days, all of this would make sense, but right now, they needed an explanation.

V 19-20 **"Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?**

**20: Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the**

**world shall rejoice: and ye shall be  
sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be  
turned into joy."**

--- **ye shall weep and lament."** Now that was  
clear enough, but it wasn't too  
encouraging.

And if it was going to be as bad as that,  
how could such sorrow be "**turned into  
joy?"**

And did you notice Jesus' words, "**but the  
world shall rejoice."**

That's quite a revelation, isn't it?

Certainly we were aware of the scribes and  
Pharisees' hated, but to be rejoicing  
when He was suffering on a Roman cross?

What an insight into the black recesses of  
their wicked hearts!

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Yes, Jesus had brought the picture into focus, and it was not a pretty one.

But it was not all bad news either --- **"ye shall weep and lament"** but **"your sorrow shall be turned into joy."**

What an unbelievable contrast of emotions! Once again, Jesus used an everyday example to put this whole situation into perspective.

V 21-22 **"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.**

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

Have you ever seen a picture in the daily newspaper of a mother with her baby? Perhaps it's the first baby of the New Year. Was she scowling?

Of course not. She was smiling, and not just because her picture was being taken.

No, she was genuinely happy.

All the pain and suffering had been swallowed up by joy.

And that would be particularly true in Israel, and especially if it was a boy. It's not that girls weren't special, but in a country where lineage was so important, a boy could carry on the family name.

Yes, Jesus had chosen the perfect example to demonstrate extreme sorrow being swallowed up by joy.

It happened on a regular basis, and it was going to happen to them.

Those three days of extreme sorrow would be all but forgotten when they gathered around their resurrected and victorious Lord --- **"and your joy no man taketh from you."**

No, their joy would never fade away.

In fact, it would increase.

Yes, the Day of Pentecost would usher in a new Age of Grace, and a new and glorious gospel to proclaim.

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And then, in V 23, Jesus returns to the subject of prayer.

Prayer is the lifeblood of the Church, and in its present state, it is also Christ's personal gift to His people.

No, prayer has not always been what it is  
today.

Let me explain.

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Being good Jews, I'm sure prayer would have  
been an important part of the  
disciples' lives.

And when they met Jesus, it became even more  
important.

That's because Jesus encouraged prayer.

In fact, in His parable about the unjust  
judge, the premise was, "**that men ought  
always to pray, and not to faint.**"

Also, in times of trouble, such as in the  
Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus encouraged  
prayer --- "**Watch and pray, that ye  
enter not into temptation.**"

However, before they met Jesus, the disciples' prayer life would have been typical of any Israelite.

They were sinful men, and could only approach a Holy God from a distance.

This was particularly noticeable in the tabernacle, and then in the temple.

No Israelite could actually enter into God's presence.

His offering would be presented on his behalf by a priest.

And no Israelite ever looked upon God as his Father.

A more accurate picture of God would be found in Psalm 97:2-5 **"Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.**

**3: A fire goeth before him, and burneth**

up his enemies round about.

4: His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.

5: The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth."

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However, when the disciples met Jesus, some of this changed.

And I suppose that's not too surprising when you consider the fact that they were in the presence of an individual who was both God and man.

Who else would be better qualified, to put one hand in God's and the other in man's?

So one day when a disciple said, "**Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught**

**his disciples"**, Jesus began by saying,  
**"Our Father which art in heaven."**

This was quite revolutionary.

An Israelite never called God his Father.

In fact, when Jesus referred to God as His  
Father, the Jews were ready to stone  
Him --- **"For a good work we stone thee  
not; but for blasphemy; and because  
that thou, being a man, makest thyself  
God."**

So that was a first step, and it convinced  
His disciples that Jesus could draw  
them closer to God.

However, it was still one step removed from  
the privileged position Christians  
enjoy today.

And you will also notice that Jesus hadn't  
taught them to come in His name.

No, that would come later.

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And then, when Jesus and His disciples arrived at the upper room, He told them about a new privilege in prayer ---

**"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."**

Not only was Jesus going **"to prepare a place"** for them in heaven, but He was going to *open up* a place in heaven where they could petition God.

It was a place they could enter, in His name.

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I wonder if the disciples really understood what was happening?

I don't think so.



At that point, they were more concerned about what they were losing than what they were gaining.

You see, when Jesus departed, they would lose two privileges they greatly valued.

The first was Jesus' availability to answer questions.

And we have already talked about the second one.

He wouldn't be there to bring them nearer to God.

Would they be returning to the Old Testament concept of God?

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No doubt they were much taken up with these thoughts as they walked along the road to Gethsemane.

Jesus knew they were feeling the loss.

But He also knew His departure would bring them closer to God, not further away. So once again, He reminded them of their new privilege in prayer.

John 16:23-24 **"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24: Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."**

Here again our English language doesn't bring out all of the significance of Jesus' words.

In our language, the little word **"ask"** can be used in two ways.

First of all, we use it to indicate asking a question in order to solicit more information.

But we can also use it to indicate a request, asking for something we would like to receive.

The translators used the same word in both places, but Jesus actually used two different words.

When He said "**in that day ye shall ask me nothing,**" He used the word that would indicate a question.

And certainly the disciples had been asking Him a lot of questions lately.

Peter had asked the Lord where He was going. And then he asked Him why he couldn't follow Him immediately.

Thomas asked Jesus, *How could they know the way?*

Yes, they had asked lots of questions, but very soon they would lose this

privilege ---"**in that day ye shall ask me nothing.**"

However, as far as their second privilege was concerned, Jesus' departure would give them a tremendous step up.

His work on the cross, and particularly His new position in heaven as their Mediator, would change their concept and access to prayer.

And He would be taking this new position very soon.

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Let's take a moment to talk about mediators.

Basically, a mediator is a go-between.

A modern-day example of this is when negotiations break down between administration and labour.

In that case, a mediator is called in to resolve matters.

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Well, after Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven, He became our Mediator.

From that point on, He has been our link to the Father.

And there will never be another Mediator.

There's no man, and no angel, no matter how holy they might be, that can take His place.

Why?

1 Timothy 2:5-6 gives us the answer ---"**For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;**  
**6: Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."**

No, Jesus cannot be replaced.

He is the only One Who has given "**himself a ransom for all.**"

He's the only One who has shed His precious blood for sinners.

And, He's the only One, Who became sin for us.

So, that's why Jesus is the only One Who can bridge the gap between sinful man and a righteous God.

And because He is there, and not in the Joseph's tomb, we can have full access to the Throne Room of God.

John 16:23 "**And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.**"

When Jesus said, "**in that day ye shall ask me nothing,**" He was referring to the

end of His availability to answer questions.

But He didn't stop there. **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."**

Jesus' words **"Verily, verily"** mean *in deed and in truth*.

But they mean much more than that.

Bible scholars have noticed that when Jesus uses the words **"Verily, verily,"** He is about to introduce a new thought.

In this particular verse, that new train of thought is further emphasized by the fact that He used a different word for **"ask"** than He had just used previously. He did that because He was no longer talking about a question.

He was talking about a request, or a petition.

In the future, the disciples, and, indeed, all Christians, would be able to petition the Heavenly Father directly -- **"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."**

And because the way into God's presence had been secured by their Mediator, they should always come in His name.

Yes, because of Jesus' work on the cross, the connection between God and man, which had been broken by Adam, was reinstated.

Consequently there would be no more need for a sacrifice, and there would be no need for an Old Testament priest to represent them before God.

It was **"a new and living way!"**



Hebrews 10:19-22 "Having therefore,

brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21: And having an high priest over the house of God;

22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

That's what Jesus meant when He said in V

23-24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

24: Hitherto have ye asked nothing in

my name: ask, and ye shall receive,  
that your joy may be full."

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V 25 "These things have I spoken unto you in  
proverbs: but the time cometh, when I  
shall no more speak unto you in  
proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly  
of the Father."

Jesus often spoken in proverbs or  
allegories.

And by that, I don't mean parables.

When Jesus spoke in parables, it was a  
judgment upon Israel's unbelief.

Actually, Jesus had used two proverbs that  
very evening.

He had talked about the vine and the  
branches, and He talked about the woman  
in travail.

Also, His **I AM** saying carried a deeper meaning.

But the time would come when He would speak plainly.

Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and in the writing of the New Testament Scriptures, much of what the disciples didn't understand at that particular time would be made abundantly clear.

Yes, "**I shall shew you plainly of the Father.**"

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And then Jesus returned to the subject of prayer.

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

As our Advocate, Jesus, defends us against Satan's accusations.

But what we are considering in today's lesson is His position of Mediator. Because He is there, we have full access to our Heavenly Father.

All of this was accomplished when He was made **"sin for us, who knew no sin."**

Yes, Jesus has paid dearly to bring us into God's presence, but He hasn't promised to pray on our behalf --- **"I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you."**

No, He has provided a **"new and living way"** into His Father's presence, and He expects us to use it.

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And there's another reason why we have the ear of our Heavenly Father.

Jesus told His disciples about that, in

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

Yes, God loves us because we love His Son.  
And why wouldn't we?

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Yes, prayer changed considerably after Jesus  
went to the cross.

It's a high and holy privilege, but how  
often do we use it?

If we were the son or the personal friend of  
the richest man in the world, we would  
feel quite privileged.

If we could pick up the phone and suggest  
that he put a few million here or  
there, we would consider ourselves  
quite fortunate.

Look at the good we could do!

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Well, we have the ear of the **"LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God,"** and because of Jesus, He is our Father. And when we make that call, we won't get His voicemail.

No, He is always there, and His ear is always open to our cry.

So, let's stop wringing our hands and start moving mountains --- **"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."**

That is, if it's according to His will, and I'm glad He put that safeguard in there.

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Hebrews 4:14-16 **"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.**

**15: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**

**16: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."**

Yes, the most powerful utterance you will ever make is, "Heavenly Father, we come unto thee in Jesus' name."

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

Here, Jesus sums up His earthly ministry in three majestic statements.

**"I came forth from the Father"** --- speaking  
of His incarnation.

Yes, Jesus **"came forth from the Father."**

Unlike ourselves, His birth wasn't the  
beginning of His existence; it was only  
the beginning of His mission.

--- **"and am come into the world,"** speaking,  
of course, of His mission.

Jesus came for two purposes.

He came to fulfill God's promise to Israel,  
and He came to be **"the Lamb of God,  
which taketh away the sin of the  
world."**

--- **"again, I leave the world, and go to the  
Father."**

Here, He speaks of His departure, and His  
ascension.

That's the part that was troubling for His  
disciples.



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V 29-30 "His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

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

In a burst of insight, His disciples felt they had arrived.

Certainly, their faith was commendable, but Jesus knew it was only temporary.

V 31-32 "Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

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

Yes, before the night was over, they would forsake Him, but He would not be alone. The scribes and the elders would bring false witnesses against Him, but His Heavenly Father would be there.

Herod and Pilot would abuse Him physically, but His Father would stand by Him.

He would tread the long road to Calvary, and be nailed to the cross, but His Father would be with Him all the way.

The religious leaders and the crowd would mock Him, but His Father would be there.

But when He became "**sin for us, who knew no sin,**" His Heavenly Father was not there --- "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**"

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But with all of this before Him, His  
Shepherd's heart still hovered over His  
sheep.

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