
ENDURING JOY

John 16:16-33

1. Jesus *returned* from
death. (16:16-22)

Luke 23:27 And following
Him was a large crowd of
the people, and of women
who were mourning and
lamenting Him.

Mark Dever, “Christian, your sufferings are the last gasps of the judgment you’re being delivered from.”

2. The Father *answers* prayer. (16:23-28)

John 14:13 "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me
but I chose you, and appointed you
that you would go and bear fruit,
and that your fruit would remain, so
that whatever you ask of the Father
in My name He may give to you.

3. Jesus *overcame* the
world. (16:29-33)

Corrie Ten Boom:

If you look at the world, you'll be distressed.

If you look within, you'll be depressed.

If you look at God, you'll be at rest.

4. Applying the Word

a. Be *honest* about hardship.

b. *Consider* what you are
building your joy upon.

c. Build your joy upon Jesus,
who *conquered* death and
the world.

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July 12th, 2026

Big idea: The disciples' grief at the death of Christ will be replaced by lasting joy after the resurrection. That joy will come from answered prayer, clear understanding, and confidence that He has overcome the world.

Intro

In these chapters of John, we are given a very transparent view of the disciples.

They are slow to pick up on what Jesus is saying – He is going away.

They are troubled.

Grief is starting to well up and will overtake them when Jesus is taken away from them.

Jesus is patiently and thoroughly teaching them over the course of 4 chapters. What He says to them, applies to us.

As He wraps up His teaching before turning to prayer in chapter 17 and then the series of events that result in the cross and resurrection resume in chapter 18, He gives them three facts that encourage enduring joy.

Three facts that encourage enduring joy

For the disciples, they were future promises. For us, they are present realities that we often overlook.

1. Jesus **returned** from death. (16:16-22)
 - a. "A little while" – 7 times the phrase is used in this section
 - i. No longer see Me...you will see Me
 1. Two options – death and resurrection, ascension and return
 2. Death and resurrection makes the most sense
 - a. Their grief turns to joy
 - b. It is truly "a little while" for both – He would die the next day and rise three days later
 - c. New access in prayer follows after they "see Him" – which makes sense after His resurrection but doesn't reflect well a future reality after his return.
 - b. Clearly they still don't fully understand
 - i. Repeated emphasis on His departure in ch 13-16
 1. **John 13:33** "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. .

2. **John 14:18-19** "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.
 3. **John 14:28** "You heard that I said to you, I go away, and I will come to you. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.
 4. **John 16:5** "But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, Where are You going?
- ii. Still so contrary to their expectations of the Messiah and His kingdom.
 - iii. V. 18 has the sense of, "they continually kept saying" – what is this? We don't know what He is talking about.
- c. At the cross, they will weep and lament while the world rejoices.
- i. **Luke 23:27** And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.
 - ii. The people mocking Him "rejoiced" in making light of Him. The religious leaders who sought his death saw it as a victory.
- d. "But" – marks a strong contrast – their grief will be turned to joy.
- i. Analogy of a woman's pain in childbirth followed by joy in her child
 - ii. Fitting analogy – their grief and pain will be very real. Their lives will appear to be shattered as their friend, their leader, their Messiah hangs on the cross in defeat. But that will be replaced by incredible joy when He returns from the grave. The joy will be all the more prominent because of the depth of pain.
 - iii. A woman in childbirth feels great pain and commonly thinks or says something like, "never again! This will be an only child!" And then she's snuggling a new born and getting the first smiles from a 3 week old and the joy of her baby eclipses the pain of the birth. The pain was still there and still real, but it has somewhat dimmed even in her memory with a baby in her arms.
 - iv. Matt Carter: Sorrow and joy are not two random emotions that happen to appear in this order chronologically. The sorrow must take place if the joy is to come. There's no skipping sorrow to get to the joy. Most ladies would love to skip nine months of pregnancy and an excruciating labor and just hold their newborns in their arms (v. 21), but it doesn't work that way. You don't get the newborn without the morning sickness, swollen ankles, and contractions. Jesus tells the disciples they can't get the joy without experiencing the sorrow.
 - v. The disciples will experience sorrow – they will see Jesus arrested and in terror will briefly try to fight back. They will follow along with the unjust trials. They will hear the whip hit his back. They will see him hang on the cross. His

lifeless body will be taken down, wrapped in cloth, and tucked into a tomb behind a rock on a Friday. Saturday will be a dark day. But with the rising of the sun on Sunday morning, they will find the tomb empty, and will embrace their friend in a resurrected body.

- e. Their hearts will rejoice and no one will take their joy away
 - i. His resurrection proved that what He said was true, that death is no longer an undefeated enemy, that our sins have been paid in full, that the sufferings in this life are the closest we will ever get to judgment.
 - ii. Mark Dever, “Christian, your sufferings are the last gasps of the judgment you’re being delivered from.”
 - iii. The more real that truth is for us, the more present our joy will be.
 - iv. Joy in other things can be taken away – a car can be crashed or turned in to a lemon, a relationship can go sour, money can run out, a job can be lost, health can turn quickly into sickness.
 - v. But joy in the resurrected Jesus who conquered sin and death is unquenchable.

2. The Father **answers** prayer. (16:23-28)

- a. Another repeated theme in the upper room discourse
 - i. **John 14:13** "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
 - ii. **John 15:16** "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.
- b. In His name – based on His character, nature, substitutionary death – consistent with His goals and values.
 - i. There’s a new privilege as we are united with Jesus to ask in His name.
 - ii. Loren’s analogy of being given a company credit card and told, “buy anything you need” but the implication is, anything you need for the business, for the job, for the company. The name of the company is on the card.
- c. Think about your prayers – if you put them in two categories – those that are for your comfort and those that are for the mission for which God has you here on earth – which category do they fall into most often? If God answers this prayer, will it contribute more to my comfort or my mission? (adapted from Carter)
- d. He will speak to them in plain words not figurative language
 - i. Partly fulfilled in this conversation as they say in v. 29 – now you are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech.
 - ii. Looking ahead after the resurrection where they realize with great clarity then what he meant by “going away” and being 3 days and nights in the grave

just like Jonah was in the belly of a fish and the temple torn down and rebuilt in 3 days (his body).

- e. But it's not that He asks the Father on our behalf but that we ask the Father directly in Jesus' name.
 - i. He isn't a reluctant wish granter who needs to be persuaded by His Son.
 - ii. "for the Father Himself loves you."
 - 1. This is why we can be bold in prayer and come to God directly.
 - 2. Do you have a hard time repeating the simple phrase, "God loves me"? Some Christians do. Maybe because it has been sentimentalized or misused to justify sin because after all, "God loves me" and would want me to be happy. It might come from theological reasons – we recognize the Bible's teaching on our own depravity so it's easier to think of ourselves as a wretched worm than to think, "God loves me."
 - iii. Because you have loved Me
 - 1. The believer is folded in to this relationship of love between Father and Son. He loves us and draws us before we ever loved Him (1 John 4:19). We believe in Jesus and love Him and follow Him. He loves us with a richer, deeper experience of love.
- 3. Jesus **overcame** the world. (16:29-33)
 - a. The disciples seem like they are starting to understand – "now You are speaking plainly!" and they say we believe that You came from God.
 - i. This has been Jesus' teaching from the beginning and there have been deepening moments of belief for the disciples.
 - b. "Do you know believe?"
 - i. It's a question but it reflects uncertainty or lack of confidence in their belief because of what He says next.
 - ii. Do you really believe? You will be scattered and leave Him alone.
 - 1. Mt. 26:56 records this as they all fled after His arrest.
 - 2. Peter famously denied even knowing Jesus.
 - iii. That doesn't seem to contribute to their joy to be told about how they will fail, but it is honest and factual and it contrasts with Himself.
 - iv. We need to come to grips with our own failures in contrast with His steadiness.
- c. He will not be alone because the Father is with Him.
 - i. The unity of relationship between the Father and Son means that He is not truly alone.

- ii. Because Jesus' life is a model for us, there is an example for us in this as well.
 - iii. We may feel alone and abandoned by people, friends, churches but the Father is with us. More accurately, the Triune God is with us since the Spirit is sent to dwell in us and will never leave us.
- d. The words are meant to give us peace.
 - i. Which words? The immediate teaching about His resurrection and answered prayer, but also this whole teaching from chapters 13-16 since this concludes the teaching portion.
 - ii. Mediate on these chapters when you feel like your life is in turmoil and you need peace. Mediate on them especially when you are being opposed for the gospel and experiencing some tribulation.
- e. Our peace is "in Me" – it comes from being united to Jesus in vital fellowship, like the branches connected to the vine as we abide in Him.
- f. In the world we should expect tribulation.
 - i. It means to suffer, to have trouble, to expect persecution, to have affliction. It literally means "pressure" or "pressing together."
 - ii. That feels like an apt description for persecution but also the "normal" hardships in a broken world. We feel lots of pressure, things pressing down upon us.
- g. We can take courage – why?
 - i. Is it because we are by nature optimists? Some of us are, but he isn't talking about a personality trait.
 - ii. It can be translated "never lose heart" and means to have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing.
- h. Our confidence or firmness comes from the truth that Jesus has overcome the world.
 - i. His death and resurrection – still future but spoken of with such certainty its as if it has already occurred - has rendered the world's opposition pointless. He experienced the worst the world could throw at Him – a painful, humiliating death – and He overcame it. He prevailed against it or had victory over it. It's a promise that evil will not ultimately win, even if we experience the hard edge of tribulation.
 - ii. I'm grateful for the time and place in which we live. We have great freedom and prosperity, it's not perfect but compared to history, we live in a great time, and compared to global standards, we live in a great place.

- iii. But those things could be taken away. Tyranny could take away our freedom and our rights. We have brothers and sisters in Christ who in China right now that are imprisoned and haven't seen their family in 9 months.
- iv. It might not even be "persecution," it might just be a turn in prosperity – a financial collapse or even just a turn in your own health.
- v. But we can have peace and be of good courage, because Jesus has overcome the world.
- vi. Corrie Ten Boom, who experienced great hardship under Nazi forces in WW2, famously wrote, "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God, you'll be at rest."

4. Applying the Word

- a. Be **honest** about hardship.
 - i. Suffering people in the Bible encourages us to be honest about our own suffering.
 - ii. Persevering doesn't mean pretending, but I think we act like that sometimes.
 - iii. Instead, we need to acknowledge it when life is hard and then speak truth to our own hearts.
- b. **Consider** what you are building your joy upon.
 - i. "If I only had _____, I would be happy."
 - ii. If your joy is like a meter that goes up and down, what causes it to go up and down for you?
- c. Build your joy upon Jesus, who **conquered** death and the world.

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2. The Father _____ prayer. (16:23-28)

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Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 16:16-33

1. The two main interpretations of v. 16 are that Jesus is referring to His death and resurrection or that He is referring to His return to the Father and second coming. What is the best evidence for each position? Which do you think best fits the context?
2. Why did “the world” rejoice as Jesus’ death? (v. 20)
3. Explain the analogy of the woman giving birth in v. 21? If you’ve experienced childbirth, does that match your experience? How is that similar to the disciples’ experience in the coming days?
4. How does this section about prayer (16:23-28) compare to the other teachings about prayer in the upper room discourse in 14:13 and 15:16? Why do you think Jesus continues to repeat this teaching on prayer right before His death?
5. What does Jesus clarify about prayer in v. 26? Why is that distinction important?
6. Why do some Christians have a hard time embracing the simple truth in v. 27 that the Father loves them?
7. What has Jesus said that should lead to peace (v. 33)? If that stretches back to chapters 13-16, review key points from those chapters that should lead to true peace in Jesus.
8. What does 1 John 5:4-5 teach about overcoming the world? How does that relate to Jesus overcoming the world in John 16:33?

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