

Joy in the Mourning

Luke 24:13-35

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”¹

Charles Spurgeon

Living in a world where dreams are constantly being dashed amidst the waves of uncertainty, instability² and a myriad of trials and tribulations,³ one can't help but wonder how as fragile⁴ jars of clay we could ever stand firm and constantly feel unspeakable joy. When the pain and anguish of our dire circumstances threatens to crush our minds and souls, is our only defense to become like a stoic and callously build walls around our hearts thus making our emotions a rarity?⁵ If one were to live this way then all our trials would be unsanctified and our love, joy and peace would never be felt or experienced! Praise be that in His sovereignty He who knit us in our mother's womb has the power to transform the deepest pits of our sorrow into a well spring of joy that is everlasting! If we would ask God to grant us ears to hear, eyes to see and the desire to think with the mind of Christ then we would be able to find tubers of blessings and joy surrounding our deep roots of sorrow!⁶ The following sermon is going to review some of Jesus' final words to His disciples before His crucifixion in hope that in His presence and with our eyes fixed on eternity our deep sorrows might be turned into an everlasting joy that even in the midst of our most painful of tribulations will not be squelched but strengthened for He alone is our portion, our Rock and our Salvation!

Summary of Passage

Imagine what it would have been like to have been one of the disciples and hear Jesus say “in a little while you will see me no more, and then after a while you will see me” (verse 16)! Given the gift of hindsight these words are not disturbing to us but to the disciples they were

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 183.

² John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 182.

⁴ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 182.

⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Joy in Place of Sorrow.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 329.

confusing⁷ and downright frightful!⁸ With Jesus' past crucifixion predictions ringing within their souls their sorrow was so profound⁹ that those who "stood on the other side of the cross"¹⁰



could only debate but not ask Jesus for the meaning of His words (17-8). If the time had come for prophecy to be fulfilled,¹¹ then the One they loved and followed for the last three years¹² would not only be put to death but they would be left alone to face the hatred of a rejoicing world!¹³ Jesus reassured them that like a woman giving birth to a child they would feel pain for a short while but upon His return their grief would be turned into great joy that would last forever (20-22)!¹⁴ It was not until Jesus' crucifixion, death, resurrection,

ascension and Pentecost¹⁵ that the disciples came to realize how His atonement would turn their grief into an unspeakable joy that not even the greatest persecution and tribulations of their lives could ever lessen!

Sources of Sorrow

While this passage was originally meant to comfort the disciples, it was also meant to comfort us who face many sorrows.¹⁶ While the disciples had to face the jeers of the Scribes and Pharisees who told the world that they were but "poor, foolish fanatics"¹⁷ whose Leader was a nothing more than a mere man cursed upon a tree (Galatians 3:13), we too must face the

⁷ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁸ Merrill C. Tenney, "John," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: John and Acts*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 158–159.

⁹ J. Ramsey Michaels, *John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 280.

¹⁰ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 624.

¹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, "A Wonderful Transformation," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 181.

¹² James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1223.

¹³ J. Ramsey Michaels, *John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 280.

¹⁴ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1999), 285.

¹⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1222.

¹⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1222.

¹⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, "A Wonderful Transformation," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 183.

skeptics, atheists and pretenders of many faiths that perceive us as being nothing more than mere bigots, disillusioned with a single path and absolute truth in but one God.¹⁸ Ever since the time



of Christ Satan and his demons have fought (Ephesians 6:12) hard to water-down, chip away and radically pervert God's word with mere words and lies of foolish men (1 Corinthians 3:19; John 8:44). While one is unlikely that one will face persecution as radical as being torn apart by a lion in a Roman coliseum, do not underestimate he who seeks to devour your mind, life and testimony for Jesus (1 Peter 5:8) in order to keep His words from being on your lips and entering into the heart of another! Like the disciples our enemies rejoice

in ignorance of their "worldly success" and belittle those who in their suffering and pain choose to serve but one God (1 Corinthians 8:6) and store treasures in a heaven (Matthew 6:19-21) that in their minds either doesn't exist or is but one amongst many! Yes, we too know what it is like to suffer for righteousness sake (Matthew 5:10)!

Like the disciples we too know what it is like to suffer injustice in the face of the prospering wicked. If the jeering of the skeptics, atheists and pretenders of many faiths was not



debilitating enough how does one feel unspeakable joy when we plan, work and save¹⁹ and in a moment of tribulations it evaporates into thin air while in their ungodly ways the wicked prosper, laugh and mock us by asking "where is your God? Is this the result of serving Him?"²⁰ Living in fallen world where rain falls on the righteous and unrighteous (Matthew 5:45), one can't help but feel bitter²¹ and question God's justice when His enemies live at ease while His saints

¹⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Wonderful Transformation.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 188.

¹⁹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Wonderful Transformation.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 182-183.

²¹ C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Wonderful Transformation.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 182.

suffer.²² Possibly writing the very words of King David,²³ his chief musician Asaph²⁴ wrote in Psalms 73 how in his envy of the arrogant, wicked and prosperous people of this world his “feet almost slipped” (verse 2). He foolishly thought if God would reward the evil imaginations of the callous, violent hearts of the wicked then surely his service with a pure heart to God was done in vanity (verse 13)! Thankfully, upon entering the sanctuary of God, he learned that the foundation of the wicked are “like a thin layer of ice”²⁵ that upon death gives way to God’s wrath and justice (verse 17). Even though we as Christians know that God’s eternal justice is absolute perfection, we often “chew our pills of anguish”²⁶ and run to drink the bitter waters of tribulations!²⁷ The anticipation and our comparisons with the prosperity of the wicked exasperates our souls so much that we often feel “a thousand sorrows” for each and every tribulation!²⁸

Sources of Joy

Like the Psalmist, lest our feet slip let us now turn to the three eternal, sources of unspeakable joy of every Christian. After having experienced Jesus’ resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost the disciples looked upon His crucifixion not as an act of tragedy²⁹ but one of great joy because in this atoning act Christ has freed them from the power and dominion of Satan³⁰ and has secured their salvation!³¹ By being born again we too participate in Christ’s death and resurrection³² and as such we “participate in His divine nature” (2 Peter 1:3-4).³³ We can live our lives in unspeakable joy because we have a shared fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (14:21, 23, 26).³⁴ Unlike worldly happiness whose planning, work and hoarding is proven

²² Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 632.

²³ C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Wonderful Transformation.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 182.

²⁴ D. A. Carson, ed., *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1076.

²⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Wonderful Transformation.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 183.

²⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Joy in Place of Sorrow.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 327.

²⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Joy in Place of Sorrow.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 326–327.

²⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Joy in Place of Sorrow.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 327.

²⁹ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1224.

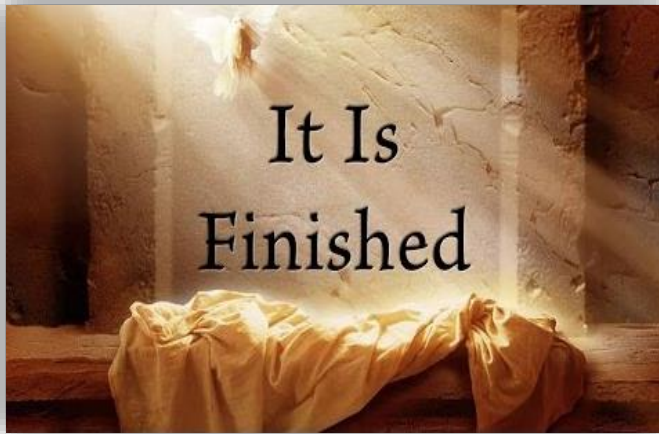
³⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Joy in Place of Sorrow.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 331.

³¹ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1224.

³² C. H. Spurgeon, “[Joy in Place of Sorrow.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 333.

³³ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Joy in Place of Sorrow.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 331.

³⁴ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1999), 285.



vanity upon one's death,³⁵ salvation in Christ provides a deep-seated joy that like Him lasts for an eternity.³⁶ This does not mean that Christians are to be stoic and pretend that sorrow does not exist³⁷ but are to view suffering on this earth as nothing in comparison (Romans 8:18) to the spiritual blessings we already have and are about to receive (Ephesians 1:3) when our triumphant Lord, the judge of the quick and the dead, returns to take us home!³⁸ The fact that Christ is not

dead but alive³⁹ and is eternally exalted and reigning at the right hand of the Father are the reasons why our deep sorrow have been turned into unspeakable joy!⁴⁰

Another source of our joy ironically can be found amidst our tribulations. It is precisely



in our weeping and lamenting,⁴¹ our brokenness and sorrow that these jars of clay come to realize their frailty and utter dependence upon their Creator. It is not on the mountaintops of blessings but the deep valleys of affliction that in drawing nearer to God we feel an unspeakable joy of His love and deliverance! Christians are to be the "happiest people under heaven"⁴² not because they lack tribulation but because in them, they can clearly see how when persevered they lead to

³⁵ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³⁶ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³⁷ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 627.

³⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, "Joy in Place of Sorrow," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 333.

³⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, "Joy in Place of Sorrow," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 332.

⁴⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1224.

⁴¹ C. H. Spurgeon, "A Wonderful Transformation," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 182.

⁴² C. H. Spurgeon, "Joy in Place of Sorrow," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 325.

spiritual maturity (James 1:2-4).⁴³ Believers can have peace in the storms of life because of their assurance that He who was despised and rejected by men⁴⁴ and acquainted with tribulations far more excessive than ours⁴⁵ is alive and promises to not allow us to suffer without Him being by our side. And should we ever be asked to join the persecuted for righteousness sake then we will not be filled with bitterness and sorrow⁴⁶ but rejoice for having been chosen for an “inch of time”⁴⁷ to give what is not ours (Jeremiah 10:23) to serve One who was and is forever! Suffering therefore is for our spiritual well-being for whom of us would ever see our utter dependence on our Savior when walking in the garden of temporal, worldly blessings! The moment we realize this to be true then like the disciples our grief will be transformed into eternal and glorious joy!

The final and most exciting source of joy for a believer is the promise that in “a little while” the Lord will return to take us to our eternal home! If we only lived in the present how wretched our lives would be,⁴⁸ but as immortal saints we live with unspeakable joy for our



sorrows can only last but a lifetime!⁴⁹ In the book of Revelation it says that when we get to heaven God will “wipe every tear from our eyes and that there will be no more death, sorrow, crying or pain for the old order of things will have all passed away (21:4).” If the Lord were to put the tears of our tribulations in a bottle would we not upon entering heaven see how foolish and blind we were to not receive them as unspeakable joy in light of our glorious, destination?⁵⁰ Surely the poor, sick and suffering Christians of this world⁵¹ that is not

their own can find unspeakable joy in knowing that nothing, “not death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither present or future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in

⁴³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Joy in Place of Sorrow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 329.

⁴⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 187.

⁴⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 185.

⁴⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 183–184.

⁴⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Joy in Place of Sorrow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 328.

⁴⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 181.

⁴⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 183.

⁵⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 189–190.

⁵¹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Wonderful Transformation,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 52 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1906), 192.

all creation will be able to separate us from the love of our God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39)! It gives great joy to just think about the fact that in just a little while we are going to experience the greatest joy of all⁵² – going home to live in the restore Garden of Eden⁵³ with our Lord!

Conclusion

Living in a world where dreams are constantly being dashed amidst the waves of uncertainty, instability and a myriad of trials and tribulations, these fragile jars of clay have been divinely enabled to stand firm and feel unspeakable joy. We need not become stoics and build walls around our hearts to dissipate our emotions to feel this kind of joy. What



then is one to do we one faces persecution at the hands of the skeptics, atheists and pretenders of many faiths or the multiplied sorrow of seeing one’s plans, work and savings evaporate in the thin air while the ungodly prosper and mock our trust in God? Living in a fallen world where the rain falls on the righteous and unrighteous suffering is inevitable, but joy is optional! The Lord’s promise to His disciples and us today of turning our grief into joy has been fulfilled and eternally secured on the cross and in the empty tomb

because He alone has freed us from the power and dominion of Satan and secured our salvation! Living in the present our lives are wretched but acknowledging our glorious future in the here and now is the key to feeling unspeakable joy in the morning! All suffering then can be turned to joy the moment we remember that suffering is nothing in comparison with the glorious riches of being in the presence of our Savior in our eternal home!

⁵² C. H. Spurgeon, “[Joy in Place of Sorrow](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 43 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1897), 326.

⁵³ James Montgomery Boice, [The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1226.