

This paragraph continues the transition from Jesus explaining his relationship to the disciples and their future existence in Him (13:31-15:17) to the disciples' relation to the world and their future life in it (15:18-16:33). In this section, Jesus teaches the disciples how He will turn their grief in to joy and how the Father will provide for all their needs in the name of the Son.

The provision of Christ is direct access to and participation in God the Father and permanent joy in place of temporary grief.

#### 1. The Disciples' Confusion Concerning Jesus' Departure (16-18)

- a. Jesus' confusing statement – "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" (16).
  - i. "A little while, and ye shall not see me" (16a)
    1. Jesus made a very similar statement in 14:19 concerning His imminent departure.
    2. Previously, Jesus used this phrase in regard to His disciples ongoing relationship with Him (cf. 14:19-24).
    3. Now, Jesus is using this phrase to address the persecution and grief that the disciples will soon face.
  - ii. "And again, a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father" (16b)
    1. The word for "see" is different here than in the previous phrase. This word can refer to inward vision as true apprehension.
    2. The way they see Jesus after His resurrection and ascension will be different. Though Jesus will be with His Father in heaven, His disciples will still be able to see/perceive Him inwardly by faith.
- b. "Then said some of his disciples among themselves, 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?" (17).
  - i. The disciples could not understand how it would be possible to see Jesus after He went to the Father.
  - ii. The disciples were confused by Jesus' prophetic language and needed further explanation.
- c. "They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith" (18).
  - i. The disciples were confused by the phrase, "a little while."
  - ii. The indefinite nature of this phrase is challenging to our human minds which crave definiteness.
  - iii. The disciples are asking the same question we all are asking when we read Jesus' statement.
  - iv. This response perfectly sets up Jesus' further instruction.

#### 2. The Disciples Coming Transition from Grief to Joy (19-24)

- a. Jesus demonstrates His understanding of their confusion and concern – "Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them..." (19).
  - i. Jesus knows our confusion and concerns before we even verbalize them.
  - ii. Hebrews 4:15 "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities..."
  - iii. Psalm 103:14 "For he knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."
  - iv. Matthew 10:29-31 "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."
- b. Jesus answers their fears with a promise of hope – "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" (20).
  - i. Jesus begins His promise with His authoritative preface, "Verily, verily, I say unto you..."
  - ii. Jesus confirms their fears that they are facing impending sorrow, "Ye shall weep and lament..."
  - iii. This imminent event will cause mixed responses.
    1. The disciples will weep and lament at the death of Christ.
    2. The world will rejoice at the death of Christ.
  - iv. Jesus promises that their grief will be turned into joy.
  - v. The cross that is the reason for the disciples' grief is also the reason for their joy.
- c. Jesus uses an illustration to reframe their grief and fear – "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" (21).
  - i. The disciples' sorrow would be intense, but it would be temporary.
  - ii. The disciple's sorrow would turn to joy when they understood what the cross accomplished.

- d. Jesus gently addresses the sorrow that was beginning to fill their hearts – “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” (22).
  - i. Jesus knew that the disciples’ grief had already begun.
  - ii. Jesus reminded them that He would see them again.
  - iii. Jesus promised them joy that no one could take away from them.
- e. Jesus promises the disciples direct access to their Heavenly Father – “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” (23).
  - i. After Jesus’ death and resurrection, disciples in Christ have direct access to the Father; previously the disciples directed their questions to Jesus; because of the cross, believers can pray directly to God as their Father!
  - ii. Believers now pray to the Father, on the basis of Christ’s righteousness, with the aid of the Holy Spirit.
- f. Jesus challenges His disciples to enter into a life of joyful fellowship with God (24).
  - i. Jesus reminds His disciples that this new era of praying to the Father in the name of Jesus had not yet occurred; this new era would soon be made possible by Jesus’ death and resurrection.
  - ii. Jesus exhorts believers to enter into relationship with their Father through prayer.
    - 1. Believers are to ask in Jesus’ name, expecting to receive.
    - 2. This relationship with God should produce complete joy.
    - 3. 1 John 1:3-7 – fellowship with God should produce joyful satisfaction in Him.

Conclusion:

- 1. The cross should put our griefs into perspective. Are you viewing your life through the lens of your griefs and disappointments, or are you viewing your griefs and disappointments through the lens of the cross?
- 2. When you face grief and sorrow, you must remind yourself that it is temporary!
- 3. Are you enjoying joyful fellowship with God?
- 4. Are you learning to pray to your Father in Jesus’ name?